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PICTURESQUE SKETCHES  
OF  
GREECE AND TURKEY.

By AUBREY DE VERE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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# PICTURESQUE SKETCHES OF GREECE AND TURKEY.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE IONIAN ISLANDS.

On the Adriatic—Arrival at Corfu—Scenery of Corfu—Character  
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CANNOT fulfil my promise and give you an account of my Greek tour without vividly recalling the pleasure which I experienced on my first approach to the shores which I had mused on in so many a youthful dream. The delight of advancing rapidly into a delicious climate, dipping into warmer, purer, and more fragrant air, can seldom be forgotten by one who has ever known it. The weather in Italy, which

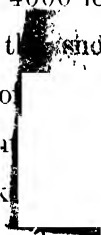


we northerns regard as a paradise." where never wind blows loudly," had been severe before I left it. At Bologna the cold had been so intense, that, even cloaked to the chin, I could hardly make my way from the hotel to the theatre; and at Ancona it was far from agreeable. You may imagine therefore the delight with which, feeling the change almost momently, I left the north and all its asperities behind me, as we steered down the Adriatic. Before the first evening I had forgotten whether my cloak was on or not, and the second night I lay on at twelve o'clock without remembering the month, January and not June. The breeze, passing over the snows of the Apennines, came to us warm from the Ægean, and mingled the softness of a southern clime with the wild and exhilarating odours of the sea. The moon was full, and pierced the firmament with a light so keen and penetrating, that, like the sculptors of old who distinguished their statues of the Virgin Huntress by the far glance of the direct, well-opened eye, we remembered that Dian was no

## ARRIVAL AT CORFU.

mere patroness of midnight dreamers or moping lovers, but that she was sister of Apollo, and that her beams, like her brother's, were arrows from an immortal bow. Beneath her orb the plane of waters seemed to swell into a wide and plenary light to the remote horizon: every rock, however distant, shone with silver radiance; and all around us—dark blue sea, and bright blue heaven—was as luminous as it was warm and pure, except where the islands, of which we passed three or four successively, trailed dim shadows over the shoals, or flung a darker streak of purple beyond their rocky promontories..

We arrived at Corfu within fifty hours after leaving Ancona. It was too late to allow of our disembarking: but on such an occasion a traveller enjoys his prolonged anticipation of a feast thus extended before him in the dubious light of the imagination. We thought on the morrow, and found it no hardship to remain on deck half the night, looking round and round upon a scene which by night or day is more beautiful than any western bay, gulf, or lake. When that morrow

had arrived, a single excursion was sufficient to prove that my expectations had not been pitched too high. The island of Corfu encircles the bay in which the town is situated, completely enclosing it on the north and south; while, to the east, the mountains of Epirus and Albania frame the picture, making the sea look like a great lake. From the margin of that sea the mountains rise to a height of from 3000 to 4000 feet: immediately behind them stand the snowy ranges sung of by the Greek poets of  are about 7000 feet in height; however, "taken the veil," like mountains, which live to themselves above but smile from their blue region upon a beaming sea, looking down over the shoulder of the terrestrial mountains ranged before them, with a glance at once familiar and divine, like that which the Homeric gods cast over the heads of demigods and heroes upon the affairs of mortals. In some places a third chain of mountains rises behind the others, and the effect is indescribably grand at sunset, when

the nearer ridge has put on its violet vest, while that above it is mantled in crimson; and along the highest, which then seems transparent, floats that rose-coloured flame, the quintessential spirit of light. Within the island, the hills are from 2000 to 3000 feet high, and are in most places covered with groves of olives, whose “knarled and unwedgeable” trunks, dried up and wrinkled by the fervid handling of many a summer, seem as if they might have gained their worldly experience before Ulysses himself had cut his wise teeth or told his first lie. The ground is never flat except in a single instance; nor, on the other hand, does it swell into those soft and smooth undulations which delight the traveller whose foot tarries upon the green slopes of Clarens and Vevay, and displaces the fruit-tree blossoms with which they are reddened in spring. It is abrupt and broken, diversified with rocky shelves, terraces of vine, heathy knolls, and hollows filled with mint, thyme, and other aromatic herbs. Here and there the eye

is caught by a thicket of myrtle, blossoming in the distance, or by some inland promontory that dips into the dell, but shakes, before it reaches the shadow, a green and golden radiance from the orange-grove that tufts its steep. I give you the materials, and you may make up the picture with your best skill, and without fear of surpassing the reality : you may sprinkle the meadows with geraniums in full flower, and with thickets of rose ; and if neither are the sort which our florists would most prize for, then each grows with an abundance that paints island wilderness with colours such as few gardens can boast. The beauty of Corfu is especially characterised by its union of wildness with richness.

In the whole of the island, undivided as the sea that mirrors its bosky shores, I did not see a wall, or hedge which a child could not have squeezed itself through as easily as a lion of Eden could have pierced one of Eve's sweet-briar fences. The shores are indented by numberless long and strangely-shaped bays ;

sometimes widening inwards into little lakes, sometimes shallowing into lagunes, and sometimes leaving bare a rock, over which the sea shatters itself in showers of white foam and driving mist—a pleasant vapour-bath for the shrubs that bloom around. Here and there the water eddies round some little green island, with a few trees to define its low margin, and perhaps an old chapel in the centre, the whole space above the waves probably not exceeding half an acre. The air of this enclosed region is of a clearness which enables you to do full justice to the abundant beauty with which you are surrounded. You look through it as through a diamond, and fancy you possess the eyes of an Olympian, not of a mortal. You stand on the top of an eminence, and feel yourself “in a large room,” observing, even in the far distance, the gradations of colours, the shapes of individual objects, and the beauty of minute details, as if the whole lay close around you. The amplitude of the landscape imparts to it a characteristic nobleness ; and the natural

theatre in which you stand, is, when compared to that of our northern scenery, much as the temple of Bacchus, in which 30,000 spectators witnessed at once a tragedy of Sophocles, when compared with Drury Lane or Covent Garden.

Nothing can be more different in character than the landscapes of the north and of the south. The character of the former is grave, subdued, and tender, abounding in passages of pathos and mystery, though glorified, not seldom, by a golden haze. That of the south, on the other hand, is at once majestic and joyous, ample in its dimensions, but not abounding in a complex variety of detail; clearly defined, severe in structure, well brought out into the light; but at the same time unspiritual; in its scope, appealing less to the heart than to the fancy, expressing everything to the understanding, and, consequently, reserving little for a slowly apprehensive imagination. An analogous distinction may perhaps be traced in the character of the northern and southern races. In every country, indeed, there exists a certain analogy

between the outward shapes of nature, and the mind it has nursed and helped to form.

The woodlands of Corfu consist chiefly of the olive. Many travellers complain of the monotonous colouring of the southern olive-woods ; I think, however, that in this luminous region the effect would be too dazzling if the predominant colour were not a sober one, which, by its uniformity, as colour, permits the eye to appreciate the exquisite gradations of light and shade. The brilliancy of the clouds also requires the ~~effect~~ of something more grave to relieve the eye as it falls from them or glances aside from that most radiant of visual objects, an orange-grove. The orange-trees grow to about the size apple-trees reach with us ; and so dense is the mass of their dark and glittering leaves, that you would fancy the nightingale—nay, the nightingale's song—could hardly force its way through their ambush. They flash of themselves in the sun, though unmoved by a wind not often strong enough to disturb their phalanx. The upper leaves, being younger than the rest,



are of a transparent golden green, and shine with a perpetual sunshine of their own ; and in the midst hang those great yellow and crimson globes, which Andrew Marvel sings of as “ orange lamps in a green night.”

I wish I could give as good an account of the Greeks as of their island abode. In outward bearing, at least, they are not unworthy of being its inhabitants. In few parts of the world is there to be found so comely a race. They possess almost always, fine features, invariably fine heads, and flashing eyes ; and ~~their~~ forms and gestures have a noble grace about them, which in less favoured climes is seldom to be met with, even among the higher ranks. A Greek never stands in an ungraceful position ; indeed his bearing often deserves to be called majestic : but his inward gifts seldom correspond, if the estimate commonly formed of him be not very incorrect, with his outward aspect. The root of the evil is now what it was in old times ; for the Ionian Greeks are a false people. Seldom, even by accident, do

they say the thing that is ; and never are they ashamed of being detected in a lie. Such a character hardly contains the elements of moral amelioration. Experience is lost upon it. Those who are false to others are false to themselves also ; what they see, will always be what they desire to see ; from whatever is repulsive they will turn their eyes away ; and neither time nor suffering can bring them a lesson which ingenuity and self-love are not able to evade. The Ionian Greeks are also greatly deficient in industry. They do not care to improve their condition ; their wants are few, and they will do little work beyond that of picking up the olives which fall from the tree. These the women carry home in baskets, almost 'all the labour falling on them, while the men idle away their everlasting, unhallowed holyday, telling stories, walking in procession, or showing as much diplomacy in some bargain about a capote as a Russian ambassador could display while settling the affairs of Europe with Lord Palmerston. Their dress is eminently picturesque. On their

heads they wear, sometimes a sort of turban, sometimes a red cap; round the waist they fasten a wide white zone; and their trowsers, which do not descend below the knee, are so large, that, fastened together at the mid-leg, they have all the effect of flowing drapery, their colour in general being crimson.

The town of Corfu is a strange medley, in which a character, now Greek and now Italian, is oddly diversified by French and English associations. The house of our Lord High Commissioner is called "The Palace," and deserves the name. It is of very considerable size, is built of Maltese stone, and abounds in stately apartments. Soldiers stand in waiting along the corridors; and the landing-places and ante-rooms catch a picturesque effect from the Albanian servants, who move about with a prompt decisive grace, in their jewelled vests, and tightly-fitting buskins. In front of the palace is the esplanade, thronged all day by the red coats and well-harnessed horses of English soldiers. In the evening it is compa-

ratively quiet, and you may meet no one but a few Greek priests, sometimes alone, sometimes in pairs, pacing the long acacia avenues, with their black sacerdotal caps, black robe, dark eye,—piercing at once and still,—venerable beard, and hair that flows in waves down their backs. In the evening every one goes to the opera ; nor are even the smaller islands without their theatre.

As the spring advanced my stay at Corfu became more and more agreeable. A kindlier warmth crept every day into the air, which lost nothing, however, of its sharp and clear freshness, while it gained in sweetness. Every evening I enjoyed more and more my walk along the esplanade, between rows of Persian lilacs about the size of our birch-trees, and in redundant bloom. Under them, at each side, were beds of geraniums and all sorts of hot-house plants, which extended their ranks, as if in a conservatory a quarter of a mile long ; and around them, as soon as evening fell, the fire-flies played with their trails of green light, pure

as a diamond, till one would have fancied that the air had caught life at every pore, and darted about in sparks of electric fire. The night of the Queen's birth-day a grand ball was given at the Lord High Commissioner's house. The palace looked every inch a palace, the whole of it being thrown open, brilliantly lighted, and filled with the chief people of the island,—not, I dare say, selected on any very exclusive principle. The scene was truly festal in aspect, and everywhere there was that air of enjoyment, the absence of which is perhaps the most striking characteristic of those great London parties at which the grave guests seem to be performing some penitential duty, remembering the sins of their youth, and fashionably repenting in purple and fine linen. While some were dancing others walked up and down a magnificent gallery which runs along the top of the portico, the whole length of the building. Above us stretched an awning which protected us from the dew; beneath us were countless flowers, which did not injure the air by breathing it

before us ; around us the fire-flies flashed, and from within the music of the band streamed through all the casements and floated far away over the town. It pursued me through the thickets and gardens in which I occasionally took refuge for the sake of enjoying cooler air, and looking back on the distant revelry through the bowers of lilacs and festoons of roses. From those gardens it was not easy to return to the palace ; but their solitudes were made more delightful by the intrusion of the distant mirth.

Another characteristic scene at which I “assisted” was the prorogation of the parliament ; a scene that illustrated well the meaning of our British “protection,” and the freedom of the Ionian republic. The parliament sits in the Lord High Commissioner’s palace ; and the members entered between files of soldiers, who gave them a somewhat unceremonious greeting, so far as “privilege” is concerned, clashing their arms every moment, with emphatic loyalty, on the marble steps. As the president took his place,

the band was playing "God save the Queen." The moment the Lord High Commissioner had finished his speech, a loud peal of artillery rang out from the citadel, and pronounced the "Amen" in an audible voice; and the much-complimented, and somewhat bewildered, senators took their departure, amid the gleaming of swords, the glaring of uniforms, and the prancing of cavalry that charged up and down the esplanade. On the whole, the spectacle was both picturesque and significant, and would have met the cordial approbation of Queen Elizabeth, who marvelled that the members of the "nether" house should sometimes be betrayed into meddling with "matters of state."

There is at Corfu a university,—not using the word, however, quite in the sense in which it is applied to Oxford or Cambridge. During a visit which I paid to it I had some interesting conversation with a Greek professor, apparently a man of much learning. Among other things he discussed the subject of Greek prosody, and made himself merry with what he called our

preposterous mode of pronouncing. I referred to the poets, and asked how he could make harmony out of Homer's hexameters on his metrical principles. He, on the other hand, appealed to experience and to precedent, and affirmed that our prosodiocal system was merely an arbitrary and fanciful device of our own, which pleased us because we had invented it and were used to it. •Having no demonstrative process at hand, I appealed, as prudent controversialists do on such occasions, to common sense, to the moral sense, and to every infallible intuition which occupies the space between these extremes: especially I appealed to the ear. The little lively old man clapped both his hands to his head, and answered, "I too have ears." I looked at his head, and there were two ears, not at all too long, and in all respects as good-looking as another man's. The professor also stood on his native soil, discussed his native language, and was paid for knowing all about the matter. Accordingly, I made my submission. The only mode in which I can



reconcile local traditions with the needs of our western ears is by supposing that the chaunt of the ancient minstrel, in reciting, swallowed up all discords, just as in our cathedral chaunt mere prose can be accommodated to music, whether the clause be long or short.

The sunsets of Corfu as far exceed those of Venice, as the latter surpass a London sunset seen on one of those foggy evenings when that city, looked at from Hyde Park, might be described as a mist with trees and houses in it. One, in particular, I shall never forget ; I rubbed my eyes, thinking I was in a dream, and mounted from rock to rock, trying to assure myself that it was a reality. The colours were wholly different in quality from any that I had ever seen in clouds, flowers, metals, feathers, or even jewels. The Poet's expression, "an illumination of all gems," gives you but a faint idea of it. The effect, on the whole, was very dark. In a few minutes the splendid pageant had spread itself over all the heavens, the west being but little distinguishable from the

cast. A sudden shade fell over the scene, (the sky appearing to come nearer to the earth,) at the same time that you seemed to look for leagues and leagues through the depth of colours as glowing as if a world of dark and shining jewels had been melted into an atmosphere, and suspended over our sphere. The woods and glens below, "invested with purpureal gleams," suggested to me, in their dewy darkness, the Elysian fields, and the shades where the heroic dead found rest amid their amaranthine banks, and meads of asphodel. Such colours could never have been represented in a picture. Even if the amethystine and vermilion hues could have been intelligibly rendered, nature only could have reconciled them to such shades of green and bronze. It was as if the sky had been a vast vault of painted glass : — nor perhaps will anything grander be seen till the millennium morn. These are the accidents which reveal to us at least what is *possible*, and may well be precious to us on that account alone. A region in which such effects were

frequently realised should be peopled only by such forms as we see in Perugino's pictures, standing in their rapt beauty and eternal serenity against a sunset sky of pale green.

I spare you the whole of my small learning on the subject of the ancient Corcyra. Where lay the Homeric Phæacia, and where the city of Alcinous stood, nobody knows ; and discussions on such subjects, when much prolonged, prove chiefly that the disputant has not caught much of the genius loci. Ulysses probably troubled himself little about the genealogy of Circe or Calypso ; and the modern traveller need not very closely investigate questions about Ulysses, which, however they may be decided, leave the legend where it stands. The habitation of such things is the human fancy ; and whoever wants to know the exact spot where the Hero was found by Nausicaa, had better put by his map, walk along the coasts, and fix on a spot where the meeting *ought* to have taken place. I found a dozen such. There are, alas ! few remains of anti-

quity in Corfu. Some traces still exist of a temple, probably dedicated to Neptune. They are situated in a little green dell which hangs, amid olive-bowers, on the steeps beside the eastern sea. Some relics of ancient mythology also hold their ground in a modified form. Near the ancient Leucimna is an eminence called "Nercido Castro," a title derived from the circumstance that the spot is accounted a favourite resort of the Nereids, whose tutelary care is not yet quite forgotten, though no longer invoked with libation and vows.

Some persons are simple enough to imagine that the south is a land of perpetual sunshine. Such is not the case, even in Corfu, that fairest garden of the Adriatic. The morning of my departure was not very promising. During the preceding day the heavy rain fell, as it were, in a mass, on the earth. The next morning the sky was still louring, and the sea, during the preceding month a deep blue, had changed into a turbid and gloomy green. The Albanian

mountains frowned behind their clouds, and the loftier of them were of a threatening purple bordering on black, with the exception of their white summits, and the long rifts down their sides in which the snow still lurked. The sky, however, had become as bright as usual before we had dropped anchor in the bay of Paxos. We had not time to land. The little luxuriant island looked like a smaller Corfu, but without its mountains. Its olive-woods sloped down the hills in all directions to the water's edge, and stood

“With their green faces fix'd upon the flood.”

A few windmills clustered together on a mound near the sea; and their circling sails harmonised with that general air of industry and life which contrasted with the Elysian stillness of Corfu's lawns and bays, where the natives think it exertion enough to walk in the sun, and their English protectors wonder that neither new roads nor schools can inspire them with a little Dutch industry or American energy.

We reached the harbour of Santa Maura, the

ancient Leucadia, at about four o'clock in the evening. Landing at the fort, and proceeding thence by a long causeway and a ferry to the town, we wandered on into the island till it was late and dark. Our path lay principally through woods of olive ; and after some time the moon silvered the distant mountain-tops wherever they were visible through the gaps in the forest, and rained its white light through the twinkling foliage of the trees close by us, and through the rifts in their aged stems. At night we embarked again ; and I was left almost alone on deck, to watch one of the most beautiful and pathetic of spectacles—a moon-setting at sea. It sank with a staid pomp and magnificence analogous to that of sunset, but far more melancholy in effect. The declining orb became a dark orange-colour as it approached the water. The clouds hung depressed around it in heavy masses, wanly tinged, not irradiated, by its light ; and the sea, dark everywhere else, burned beneath it with a gloomy fire. The moon had all but disappeared, when the man at the helm called

out to me, "That 's Sappho's Leap." I turned, and its last beam still played on a white rock, the extremity of the Leucadian promontory. That rock will be an object of interest while the world lasts, associated as it is with the memory of the most celebrated woman who has ever lived ;—celebrated by a love-song and a love. How far her celebrity was deserved, we shall never know ; but travelling as we do, through time as through space, amid a world half-visionary and half-historical, we shall do best to regard such records, as I did the material monument, not with a near or captious scrutiny, but at a distance and by moonlight.

Before eight the next morning we had leaped on the shores of Cephalonia. Its bay is long and narrow, not lustrous like that of Corfu, but clouded with the shadows of steep mountains, which slant to the dim water in masses of barren rock, with scarcely a tree or a blade of grass to diversify them, from the grey ridges above to the caverns below. One of these caverns is a remarkable object, and a great scandal to

the philosophers. It is situated about twenty feet from the margin of the sea, the water of which winds in a stream nearly parallel to the shore for about as many yards, descending in its course with a current so strong as to turn a mill close by. Reaching the cavern, it disappears; and what becomes of it none can discover. Whether it flows along under the bed of the sea, or loses itself among the roots of the mountains, is a mystery not to be solved by the island philosophers. The spot is eminently picturesque, surrounded as it is by rocks fringed with aloes, which protrude their long pointed leaves far before them, and cast immoveable shadows upon the sea-walls among the shelves and ledges. Some of these aloes spired up in thick flower-stems at least twenty feet high, none of which however bore flowers. We walked for hours along the sides of the mountains, which, though generally bare, sink here and there into shallow coves and flat spaces near the sea, clothed with a vivid green and occasionally sprinkled with gardens. A particularly beautiful effect



was produced by the almond-trees, whose pendulous masses of snow-white blossom swayed about in the lightest breeze. The companion of my walk, a Dane, was a man remarkable both for learning and ability. He lectures on history at the military school of Athens,—a position for which he is qualified by an extent of erudition not common even in Germany, the country where he was in part educated. He astonished some English officers who had been for years quartered in those regions by a knowledge very superior to that which they had acquired, not only respecting the history and antiquities of each island, but also as to its statistics and present state. It was amusing to see the little square-built, close-knit man with his dry ardour, modest confidence, and conscientious accuracy, interposing to correct any error into which they might fall while discussing such subjects. He lectures in modern Greek, reading the ancient also like his native tongue, as well as most of the European languages. He prophesies that what he calls the fifth great attack on the

liberty and civilisation of Europe will one day be made by the Russians ; but he thinks that it will be frustrated, and end in the breaking up of that great empire.

At Zante I was only able to pass a single night. A glance is enough to prove that it deserves its Italian title "Fior di Levante." It consists, mainly, of a vast and rich plain cultivated with currants, and abruptly terminated by a picturesque mountain-ridge. The Ionian Islands are worthy of their fame, and our love, if beauty constitutes worth. They were successively the resting-places of Themistocles, Aristotle, Alexander, Augustus, and Germanicus. Antony and Cleopatra also sailed by them in their golden galleys before the battle of Actium. Their political history is full of interest. The contests of Coreyra with Corinth, the parent city of that colony, were long and memorable, and, on a smaller scale, exhibited perhaps as much heroism as was displayed in the American war of independence, with not a little of the same motives on both sides. And yet Corfu

will always be remembered, chiefly in association with the Homeric legend of Ulysses ; nor shall I be the last traveller to wander along its sylvan shores, from creek to creek, in search of the exact spot where Nausicaa, modest and bold, first lifted up her eyes, full of wonder and pity, on the shipwrecked man whom she led to her father's palace.

From Zante I sailed for Patras in an English steamer, and have seldom been more amused than by the contrast between English manners and those of the islanders among whom I had been, lately sojourning. The unceremonious vivacity of the Greeks makes even a lively Frenchman look dull by comparison. Judge then of my astonishment when I found myself in the midst of Englishmen, and of Englishmen recently come from home. I could never sufficiently admire their sublime tranquillity, or, rather, that wonderful *vis inertię*, which seemed sufficient of itself to keep the ship steady in a storm, and which would, no doubt, have made even sea-sickness a dignified condition. I gazed

almost with awe at their smooth-brushed hats, which the Egean breezes hardly dared to ruffle, —their unblemished coats, and immaculate boots, on which several of them gazed more attentively than they would have done at the Leucadian rock. Happen what might, their magnanimous indifference to all chances and changes, not connected with business or duty, preserved them from “all astonishment.” Had a whale risen close beside us and spouted its foam in their faces, they would, I believe, have contented themselves with observing that “it was not in good taste.” To one of them I spoke, by way of experiment, of Sappho’s leap and the Leucadian rock; “Yes,” he replied, “I have heard that it was the scene of a distressing accident.” I must say, however, in justice to my new acquaintances, that they appeared thorough gentlemen. In antiquities they were far indeed from being versed; but in the principles, ancient but ever young, of patriotic duty and honour they had, probably, little to learn.

## CHAPTER II.

### FROM PATRAS TO ATHENS.

Missolonghi—Patras—An Albanian Guide—Antiquities—Scenery between Patras and Vostizza—Lepanto—Territory of the Achaian League—English and Greek Mountains—Site of Sicyon—Ancient Remains—Robbers—Character of our Albanian Guide—Corinth—The Acropolis of Corinth—Ruins of Temples—The Fountain of Peirenè—Callimachi—Arrival before Athens.

STRANGE memories, and something more than memories, seemed to stir within me, as, leaving the islands behind, we drew near to the ancient Hellas, and saw the white mountains of the Morea, at one side, shining above a long line of mist, and right before us, those that border the “immortal waves that saw Lepanto’s fight.” The first record, however, which met the eye was not an ancient one. As we glided past Missolonghi we thought—who would not?—of Byron. Nowhere else does one feel so much in charity with him. His fate will long impart an interest to a place which would otherwise not

possess much to attract notice. Missolonghi is a long, straggling, white village, surrounded by marshes, and backed with fine mountains. Passing it by, we reached Patras. The town is picturesquely situated at the base of a high mountain during a large part of the year covered with snow, and is surrounded in every direction by lofty hills. Two vast headlands of bare rock—blocks apparently about 2000 feet high—slope opposite to it down into the bay, which is completely locked in by the Ionian Islands. The situation of Patras is beautiful, even to those who have seen Corfu. The town, which is a tolerably thriving one, contains several wide streets, most of the houses being new, and many of them well-built. I amused myself walking up and down the principal street, looking at the Greek and Albanian boys, who sat at work in their booths at each side, with legs crossed in the Turkish fashion. As the stranger passed, they lifted their quick black eyes, in rapid inquest, from their occupation, which generally consisted in the embroidery of coloured slippers

and all sorts of gay apparel. Those boys were characterised not only by extraordinary delicacy of feature, but by a girlish expression of grace, alertness, and vivacity.

I had intended to have taken a boat for Corinth, but the wind proved unfavourable. As I stood in doubt, a young Albanian, clad in the close-fitting vest, white skirt, and scarlet shoes of his country, stepped up to me with a gay and graceful familiarity, and without actually tapping me on the shoulder, accosted me, after a brief but decorous salutation, as if we had been acquaintances all our lives. An English gentleman, he informed me, was in the same difficulty as myself, and had just decided on taking horses and riding to Corinth. He was himself engaged as a courier and travelling servant, (to the extraordinary good fortune, as he assured me, of his master,) and I could not do better than join the party. The splendid attire and marvellous beauty of the man, who combined the features of his country's sculptured divinities with the wild grace of a young panther, might

have dazzled me into obedience, had I hesitated. I was, however, well pleased with the proposal, and still more so after I had made acquaintance with the travelling companion I had so opportunely met. After forming our plans and ordering our horses, I found that I had still a few hours to devote to Patras, and availed myself of it by taking a solitary walk into the country.

Just beyond the modern town, and higher up the hill, extends the old village,—for one can hardly call it by a more dignified title,—which formerly bore the name of Patras. It consists chiefly of mud hovels, each connected with its little garden-plot, but all as confusedly mingled and as ill combined, as if the village had just been shaken out of a bag. Higher still, there stands a venerable old castle of the middle ages, the strong walls of which sustained many a siege during the war of independence, but always repulsed the assailant. It is of a vast size, and in its base some blocks that belonged to the ancient Acropolis



are to be observed. Within a niche in one of its walls I remarked a statue which had suffered from the guns of the besiegers ; but the fortress is still tolerably perfect, and derives an interest from its situation as well as from its fortunes. Not far off is an object as venerable as the castle itself, and perhaps as old,—a plane-tree of enormous dimensions, probably not less than thirty feet in circumference. It towers aloft in solitary grandeur, without a compeer or a companion, except a few almond-trees, the very impersonation of vegetable youth and flexible grace. About a quarter of a mile higher up the mountain-side are some picturesque arches mantled in ivy, the remains of a Roman aqueduct. Near the sea, there are also vestiges of an ancient temple, the only one, not obliterated, of all which Patras boasted of old.

The associations of Patras are of a composite character, combining Greek and Roman records. I do not know that this circumstance adds to its interest : on the contrary, I have generally found that such cross influences neutralise each

other, and that the imagination is most deeply affected by an impression which, however slight, is homogeneous. In one respect Patras resembled Rome itself; it was a great receiver of stolen goods. When Augustus, for the purpose of making Patras a great commercial centre, colonised it afresh, he brought thither, as a matter of course, not only large numbers of men from the various cities of Greece, but with them those associates, without whom a Greek never felt at his ease or in good company; I mean the statues of the gods and the heroes. Patras thus became one of the most splendid cities of Greece; but it has retained little of its ill-gotten prey. Its temples and its statues have vanished; how—we can but guess. I am often tempted to wish that all Greece, when its long and bright day was over, had met the fate of Pompeii; and that, as a whole country cannot be preserved inviolate under a glass case, a friendly shower of ashes had afforded the required protection. Such a wish includes, of course, the condition, that the covering of ashes had been destined to melt

away in our own time, like a veil of winter snow. What a radiant apparition of temples and statues would in that case emerge from the darkness, and astonish our modern eyes !

In the afternoon of the next day, we started on our expedition; and a singular cavalcade we made, our horses being among the most degenerate descendants of the "tempest-fresh-footed steeds," celebrated in Pindaric song, while those which served to carry our luggage were shabbier still. Behind us trudged a noisy rout—our guides and the proprietors of our horses. The way from Patras to Corinth (road there is none) delighted me by its beauty and its wildness. Our path generally followed the windings of the coast. At the opposite side of the gulf rose vast mountain ranges, the summits of which were veiled behind clouds so smooth and motionless as to look almost solid. I could easily imagine the old Greeks fancying their snowy tabernacles to be the habitation of gods. On our right hand, the mountains of the Morea stretched far away; but their peaks were generally hidden by the

interposition of their own lower ranges, which, in the earlier part of our pilgrimage, slanted up green to a considerable height, but, as we advanced, ascended in grey walls and bastions, and sometimes in more fantastic shapes. Often there was hardly room for our narrow and zig-zag path between the mountain bases and the sea. The ledges were plumed from steep to steep by a sort of grey pine, almost as flat-headed as a thorn, and not much larger; the interspaces between which were filled up by the dwarf cypress. We passed, as we rode on, occasional gaps in these mountain walls, perhaps a quarter of a mile wide; and looking far inland beheld, instead of ivied rocks, and great black caverns with the sea roaring at their portals, a quieter scene,—lonely glens discerned through narrowing vistas, and beyond them mountains rising range above range, their blue and their purple deepening through the various gradations of aerial distance, and the remoter of them shining, strongly yet placidly, with unyielding snow. For the most part, however, the

interval between the sea and the mountains could not have been less than two or three miles, the intervening space being covered with a vegetation more beautiful than any tree could afford, consisting of arbutus, dwarf holly, laurestinus, thyme, and oleander, all mingled and massed together in thickets, or rather "in jungles. For leagues, as we traversed the wild, there was neither human being nor house in view ; but the scene was not therefore dreary. All around us we heard the bleating of the lambs ; and now and then we stopped to admire a tall white goat, (ragged as those tended by Pan himself,) rearing up, supported on his hind legs, with his head buried in an ivy-bush, or vainly endeavouring to extricate his venerable beard from the hollies.

We stopped for the night at a cottage which served as a sort of inn or halfway-house. It was not much inferior in appearance to the resting places you meet in the more retired parts of England ; but certainly it was less amply stored with creature comforts. Our bedroom was a

loft over the stable. Fortunately it possessed a fire-place, otherwise we should have suffered much from cold, as even Greece can be cold in February,—and the moonlight shone clearly through the rafters of the roof. Beds there were none ; and I doubt whether there is one to be found in the once luxurious Corinth. My capote, however,—a goat-skin cloak with a spreading hood,—kept me warm ; indeed, even in the open air, the thick unpliant texture of a capote protects one like the walls of a house, and serves at once for raiment and habitation. It was late before I could persuade myself to retire to rest. The night was beautiful ; and the little bay beside which we had taken up our abode, with its sands bright as silver and its ripples flashing above them ; its bowers of oleander bending over the margin of the sea ; its sea swelling up with dark glazed azure against the moonlight ; the snow-capped mountains at the other side, and at their base the town of Lepanto—altogether formed a scene which it was difficult to quit. Nor was it the beauty of that

scene only, which prolonged my vigil far into the night. I do not in general feel much enthusiasm about battle-fields: but it would have been difficult to have gazed upon those waves of Lepanto without some recollection of the spectacle they witnessed when the banners inscribed with the Cross triumphed over the Crescent, and the Turkish ships, to the number of nearly two hundred, were sunk, burned, or captured by the Spanish, Genoese, and Papal fleets, under the command of John of Austria and John Andrew Doria. I retired at last to rest, just as the last embers of our fire were burning out; stretched myself on the floor, and with my carpet-bag as a pillow, slept soundly till morning.

The next day we rose early, and about six o'clock breakfasted—somewhat better than we should have done if we had not had the forethought to lay up a store of provision at Patras. We resumed our march and advanced, not very rapidly, encumbered as we were with our luggage-mules, along that coast line which in

old times constituted the territory of the Achaian league. The Achaian race, though during the palmy period of the Hellenic States it acquired but little celebrity, was assuredly one of the greatest of ancient Greece. It owed that greatness in the first instance to the quiet energy and wise abstinence with which, declining interference in most of the struggles between the rival Greek powers, it developed the large resources of its geographical situation, and matured its social system ; and in the second place to the fact that it did not put forth its political strength till the other Hellenic races were in their decline. A fruit-tree placed in an ice-house can be made to keep its vegetative energies as it were in abeyance, and consequently to burst into blossom at an unusual period, when admitted to the privileges of light and air. Such seems to have been the political fortune of Achaia. While Athens and Sparta contended, it slept like a dormouse ; and when their day was past, its sun rose. Few political revivals have taken place more remarkable than that of



Achaia, when the cities that had for so many years constituted the Achaian league sprang forth once more, banded against the tyranny which had so long oppressed them, and drove out the Macedonian garrisons. Unfortunately they did not trust wholly to themselves. In their career of victory they associated themselves with the Romans as allies, and fared, of course, as the Britons fared after they had accepted the aid of the Saxons. Our allies should be our inferiors : an ally of equal or superior power being apt to turn out the most dangerous of enemies. The Romans came as friends, and remained as masters : the name of Achaia was extended over Greece, and Achaia became but name. Not few, however, and not unimportant are the lessons it has bequeathed.

We rode on all day, the sea at our left hand, and on our right that noble chain of mountains, not less than 7000 feet in height, including among them the far-famed Erymanthus and “Cyllene hoar,” which separated of old the enterprising and maritime Achaia from the recluse

and unchanging Arcadia. Towards sunset we arrived at Vostizza, where we remained for the night. We passed the evening exploring the orange and lemon groves which decorate and sweeten its neighbourhood. Like Patras, Vostizza is an improving place, but it includes some signs of prosperity which it might perhaps dispense with, such as public places of a very humble sort devoted to billiards and cards. An inn or a bed was, however, out of the question. Vostizza stands on the site of the ancient Ægium, the place of assembly, after the destruction of Helicè, of the cities belonging to the Achaian league. Near the temple of the Panachæan Ceres was the sacred grove of Jupiter, in which, year after year, the deputies met. No remains now exist either of the temple or of the city. The next day we continued our journey, with the glorious range of Parnassus right opposite us at the other side of the gulf. Gazing at its luminous crest I could not help thinking, as I called to mind Wordsworth's lines,—

“What was the great Parnassus' self to thee,  
Mount Skiddaw?”

that the venerable bard had in this instance exhibited more of patriotic sentiment than of that profound appreciation of nature which characterises his poetry more than any other existing. Many Skiddaws would not make one Parnassus in bulk ; and in perfection of outline and beauty of position there can still less be a comparison between them. The English mountains are indeed worthy of all love and honour ; they may boast even a characteristic beauty of their own, different in kind from that of the Alps, the Apennines, and the Greek Highlands : their sylvan slopes and pastoral valleys ranged over by pacific herds, and thick-set with orchards, gardens, and happy homesteads, touch the heart with a deep moral pathos ; and the small scale of the scenery often gives a peculiar beauty of detail to the woody and indented coast against which the ripple of the lake bursts, breaking its bubble upon briar and bramble ; but so far as sublimity or the severer order of beauty is concerned, they can enter into no comparison with the mountains of the south. The difference

between mountain ranges one half of which remains above the line of perpetual snow and the bases of which are blackened with pine-forests, and mountains which are turf to the summit, is simply the difference between poetry and poetical prose. After gazing on the vast precipices of the Alps, after watching their aspiring peaks, and long barrier, (ridge or spine,) of crag and ice, staying the tempest and dividing north from south, the comparatively shapeless bulk of not a few among our English and Scotch mountains, with their soft, spongy surface, and vacillating, compromising outline, seems absolutely carnal in character. They are of the earth, earthy. However, there are so many different sorts of mountain beauty, as well as of beauty in the vales and plains, that no rivalry need be feared if none be provoked.

Towards evening one of our guides pointed to a circular flat-headed hill which stood at our right hand, about two miles off, a little in advance of the mountain chain : on its summit, as he explained to us through our interpreter,

there stands a small village occupying the site of an ancient city. That hill was the Acropolis of the ancient Sicyon, one of the most important cities of the Achaian league. A theatre, of which the seats were carved in the rock, and a stadium, also hollowed out of the hill-side, still remain ; but these are all the traces which exist of a city once so celebrated for its temples and its countless statues, a city which boasted one of the most celebrated schools of Grecian art. These slight remains of Sicyon are the only memorials now existing of the twelve great cities which lined the southern coast of the gulf, and constituted the Achaian confederation—a confederation which, as well as the Ionian league that preceded it in the same region, exhibited on a smaller scale that type after which the whole social organisation of Greece was formed.

We procured accommodation for the night in a little village of which I have forgotten the name. What was the exact nature of that accommodation I need not specify in detail, for, of all forms which egotism can assume,

the most offensive is surely that of a traveller who solemnises the apotheosis of dinners and breakfasts, and commends mine host's overcharge to eternal fame. We ate, I dare say, a bad dinner; but as the peasants of Greece, who are contented with a handful of olives and a crust of bread, certainly could not have pitied us, it is to be hoped that we took the hint, and spent no immoderate degree of compassion on ourselves. More than once on moor and mountain and in forest depths I have had to endure no inconsiderable degree of hunger, but I have never found myself much the worse for it; and assuredly one of the benefits we should derive from travelling is an emancipation from the bondage of comforts—a term under which we commonly include multitudes of things which in old time would have been luxuries unattainable by kings. The splendours and pageantries of wealth, the velvet hangings, and palatial homes of regal state make, I am convinced, a less dangerous, because a less insidious, appeal to the sensual and vain-glorious instincts of men, than

one half of those things which we speak of as “mere necessaries” absolutely essential to comfort and respectability.

\* From an undue devotion to creature comforts, at least, the light-hearted people among whom we sojourned were exempt: under our windows they kept up all sorts of games during the evening; among other things, firing at a target, and playing cards. ‘The latter, I admit, is not by any means a respectable occupation, especially for a peasantry—who ought never to ape the vices of their betters; and if you should be disposed to infer that where industrialism is deficient, reckless habits are likely to be in excess, and that a very light-hearted people may find it a little difficult to keep their feet steadily in the path of duty, I am not prepared to deny the assertion. The Greeks, like the other southern races, may require to “carry weight” when they ride the race of life; but if they can only manage to borrow that salutary ~~load~~ from a sense of duty rather than from indigestion and a dyspeptic hatred of mirth.

so much the better for them, and for those who associate with them. I have seen enough of them to know that the planet Mercury has still some magnetic influence on the tides within their veins. May that sacred influence make their songs and their mirth to abound; and may some other stellar influence, not less sacred, in conjunction with it, cause them to keep their hands from illicit familiarity with my luggage. The regions through which we had been travelling abounded with robbers. During the preceding day in a narrow pass beside the sea, we came upon some armed men who looked of very dubious character, and who apparently thought no better of us, for they eyed us rather sharply. My friend's Albanian servant, the commander of our party, drew to one side a tall and handsome fellow who seemed to be the leader of the band, and held him in conversation for a few minutes as we rode by. On his rejoining us I asked him what he had been saying to his companion. "Only giving him a little money to buy powder," was his reply.



“Who is he?” I rejoined. “A robber,” answered our trusty guide; “I have known him many years.” On my expressing some solicitude on the subject of our portmanteaus, he begged of me to be at rest, for that everything was “quite right.” “No danger with me,” he exclaimed, slapping his embroidered vest; “all men my friends safe—toujours—no danger—niente—I an army—L a fleet!” On my persisting in inquiries which he plainly considered indelicate, he sprang from the ground, to the great peril of his red leather slippers (contriving, however, whether he leaped *or* walked, to pick his steps, and avoid all except the flat stones), and exclaimed: “How much franks, how much danari have you in your sac-de-nut?” “About £50,” I replied. Upon which he informed me that the clothes in his trunk were worth at least £100, and asked whether I seriously believed that he would expose his valuable property to any danger of *pillage*. His statement rather surprised the time; but afterwards it struck me

as very likely to be true, for whatever money he made he immediately invested in some new chain or piece of gold lace.

The next day at about three in the afternoon,\* we had arrived, as I fancied, within half an hour's ride of Corinth ; for the sun shining full upon it, though hidden from our eyes by a cloud, and reflected back upon us through the pure atmosphere of Greece, brought out every feature of the town with such discriminating touches, that distance was practically abolished. On however we travelled hour after hour, and still we had not reached our place of destination. Our way was lengthened by the interposition of several rivers flowing from their mountain glens into the sea, the fords of which were not always easily passed ; and of course in no case was anything like a bridge to be found. On one occasion, after forcing our way for a considerable distance through the oleander thickets which almost choked up the wide gravelly space which the winter floods had added to the river's bed, we

came to a stream winding rapidly seaward, the depth of which sorely perplexed us. One of our guides, bolder than the rest, pushed his mule into the water at the shallowest place he could find. The animal, as I soon perceived, carried the precious portmanteau of our Albanian guide. The quick eye of Elias had made the discovery sooner still, and he called on the man to stop. His appeal not being at once attended to, he pulled out a pistol, and pointed it at the recusant, who lost as little time as possible in returning. "What would you have done," I said, "if he had gone on?" "I shoot him dead," was the reply, "he float down to the sea, and no one know; what harm?" I think he would have kept his word. Nothing, however, could be more obliging and good-humoured than his general demeanour; he never was tired of singing songs, and telling us stories of his adventures in various parts of the East, for he had been a great traveller. We were perpetually amused by the vivacity with which he remarked on everything that occurred, and the shameless-

ness with which he praised himself for his sense, spirit and address, whether shown in defeating a plot or in telling a lie. Whatever he might do, he was alike proud of the achievement; and sometimes put me in mind of the Homeric heroes, who, if they had no victory to glory in, boasted that "their swift feet had delivered them from black death and hateful Orcus." Never have I seen a fellow of a nobler presence. He might have supplied a sculptor with a model for an Apollo: his hands were as finely made as a woman's, his features were perfectly symmetrical, his black piercing eye had that roundness which, in the ancient fresco of the head of Achilles, so marvellously unites the expression of human intellect with the audacious passion of the animal, and his step seemed to spurn the earth it trod on. His language was a strange jargon of all tongues. Why we did not speak modern Greek he could not understand. Wherever he went, as he assured us, at the end of a week, he spoke the language "faster than the natives." That he spoke it well enough to

be understood I do not doubt, for he was always ready to try ~~at~~ anything ; and as my friend and I conversed, I observed that his quick eye glanced from us at the objects we regarded, suggesting to him, no doubt, the names of those objects.

During the whole of our day's ride, we had hardly met a house or human being ; at sunset, however, passing through an olive wood, we came upon a party of peasants. The red beams of the sinking luminary shone through the old stems and twisted branches upon their gay attire, and broke on the shallow pools, left behind by the winter rains, in which their forms were reflected. As we rode by, I could not but remark a certain air of disquiet and trouble which characterised the party. One woman stood a little apart from the rest, gazing intently into a wooden vessel which she held in her hands ; the others conversed eagerly. The curiosity of our Albanian, Elias (the second syllable of his name is pronounced short) was at ~~once~~ excited, and he rode up to her. On ~~rejoining~~ our party he told us that a man in

the neighbourhood was ill, and that his wife with some friends were consulting auguries in order to ascertain whether he would live or die. As far as I could understand the process of inquiry they had broken a raw egg into a vessel of water, and the fate of the sick man depended on the mode in which the yolk floated or sank. Elias would commit himself to no opinion on the subject. Old observances he held in much reverence ; but he indemnified himself by professing marvellously liberal opinions on moral questions. Persons who had seen as much of the world as he had, were free from all prejudice, as he assured us, and full of all wisdom. He was fond of appealing to the old philosophers of Greece, of whom he knew nothing but the names, and affirmed that they were infallible authorities on all subjects, and thought exactly as he did. Imagine a Harlequin-Socrates, or an Autolycus-Phocion ! Perhaps, after all, that only means—imagine Alcibiades.

About six o'clock in the evening we reached Corinth. The modern town (village it should

rather be called) is situated in the midst of ruins, most of them ruins made such by the late war. Among them rise a few Roman walls; but of all the magnificent buildings that once adorned the wealthiest of the Grecian cities, the only memorial is a single temple, to what divinity dedicated no one knows, which crowns a gentle eminence. Five fluted columns alone remain standing; and around them lie fragments of the frieze and cornice so vast in size, that one can hardly guess either how they were lifted to their station, or how, once lifted, they were ever thrown down. Corinth was the Tyre of Greece. Situated between the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs, connected thus with the eastern and western seas, and the resting-place of all who passed from the mainland of Greece to the Peloponnesus and *vice versâ*, Corinth rapidly became wealthy and dissolute. It was early eminent for its arts also, especially for those that minister to luxury: in it, the nobler arts, however, likewise flourished. When the Roman Consul,

Mummius, had taken Corinth by assault, he desired to adorn his triumph with its spoils; and accordingly issued a proclamation commanding his soldiers to spare the works of art, and enforcing his edict with the threat that "if any soldier broke a statue, he should make another himself!" The anecdote illustrates the comparative appreciation of art among the Greeks, and among that people who conquered the world—in part perhaps, because they were too stupid to do any better. Its situation would have rendered Corinth, I cannot but think, the most suitable position for the capital of the modern kingdom. Had the metropolis been placed there, one good effect would at least have followed. The antiquities of Athens would have been left in their sacred seclusion, or might have become the ornaments of a grave university city, unvulgarised by the associations of a metropolis. Had such an arrangement been adopted Corinth could hardly have failed to be the seat of a considerable trade before this time. In that case also



steamers would long since have plied between Patras and Corinth. In one of them I should probably have embarked, for few people are wise enough to use, without abusing, the modern facilities for travelling. I should then have lost a delightful ride of four days—and you would have escaped my tedious narrative.

Just above the city of Corinth (so let us call it, in deference to its ancient fame) rises its far-famed Acropolis, the most stately, majestic, and complete piece of Nature's architecture which I have seen in any part of the world. It is one vast rock which, in some points of view almost regular enough to look like a work of art, towers up with its well-squared precipices to a height of nearly two thousand feet (about two-thirds the height of Helvellyn) the tabular platform at its summit being large enough to support a city. It commands probably the noblest view in Greece, except those which expand beneath the higher acclivities of Delphi. That view, simple at once and ornate, and as ample as it is beautiful, extends over the

most interesting portions of Hellas. On one side lies the Egean, with the Bay of Salamis, Egina, and many a glistening island ; on the other, the Gulf of Lepanto, a lake eighty miles long, into which descend, from the south, the mountains of the Morea, and from the north, in marvellous perspective, the ranges of Parnassus, Helicon, and Citheron. Those mountains I had been gazing at for several days in succession ; but thus looking upon them from a height about the fourth part of their own, the effect was incomparably finer, the loss of elevation produced by foreshortening being obviated.

On the summit of the Corinthian Acropolis lie the ruins of houses, churches, and mosques, burned during the war ; and in two places, amid this Babylonian confusion, there still recline a few snow-white pillars belonging to two temples, one of them supposed to have been the Temple of Venus. Ruined as they are, they look perfect still in ruin, from their faultless and satisfactory completeness of proportion, their unviolated purity of tint, their beauty of

texture and unblunted perfection of detail, which could hardly have been surpassed by an artist sculpturing the form of that divinity to which one of them was dedicated. Neither moss nor lichen assails them, and even the ground-ivy reverently abstains from them. At the eastern side of the summit, that side first greeted by the morning salutation of the God who dwelt within sight, at Delphi, is a fountain. Above the dark pure water the rock is carved into the likeness of a temple seen from one end, with architrave and antæ; and all round are inscriptions, the vows, no doubt, of votaries. That fountain is Peirenè, the spring at which Pegasus was drinking when caught by Belerophon. From this aerial summit he soared above the Egean:—lest I should share the fate of the hero, and fall “headlong through the fields of air,” I shall rein in all unnecessary enthusiasm, and leave you to believe in the Horse of the Muses or not, as you please. It is not wholly a question of inclination—without the Muse no one can believe in their “winged steed.”

Remembering that a long journey lay before us, we left the summit of the Acropolis many hours earlier than we should otherwise have done, and made the long and toilsome descent to the plain. Descending from the crest of the hill, we reached the outer enclosure, passed through a gate and ancient tower which guards it, and, in succession, passed some other towers and another gate, a battery, and a fortress, and at last reached the first gate and the draw-bridge which connects the walled enclosure with the path which winds down along the craggy ledges to the plain. There exist a few other vestiges of antiquity, besides those I have named, in the neighbourhood of Corinth; about a quarter of a mile from it, and at the eastern side, for example, remains an amphitheatre, of which a few steps, excavated in the rock, still are traced. At the distance of about seven miles, and near the Saronic Gulf, is the Isthmian plain, which still preserves some inconsiderable traces of its ancient stadium as well as of a theatre. Not far distant are memorials of a later

age, and of a very different state of society ; the excavations of the canal by which Nero endeavoured to cut through the Isthmus of Corinth The same enterprise is spoken of still as desirable, but I suspect that the Isthmus of Panama will be cut through first. Hercules, on a memorable occasion, divided a wall of mountain for the purpose of draining a lake ; and many additional comments will be written on his heroic labours, explaining them in a philosophical, a historical, and an industrial sense, before a people so versatile and so eloquent as the Greeks, labour perseveringly, and labour in combination, on a great utilitarian work,

Late in the evening we arrived at Callimachi, a little port on the Saronic Gulf, and the ordinary place of embarkation for Athens. We immediately hired a boat ; but till midnight the wind was pronounced unfavourable, and I was obliged to while away the time, lying on a bench near the shore, and sleeping when the songs of the boatmen permitted sleep. About twelve

o'clock we cast loose ; but the Sea Powers had not been duly propitiated, and though we sailed all night, and all the next day, it was not till evening that we approached the Peiræus. Again the wind fell, and it became but too plain that it was only by the greatest efforts that we could reach the harbour before nine o'clock, the latest hour at which people are allowed to land. The sailors who calculated on a good *buonamano*, furled their sails, and pulled lustily with their oars ; while our brilliant Albanian, who, finding nothing to amuse him, had slept during the whole of the day, came up to me clapping his hands and exclaiming, "You sleep tranquil at Athens to-night. You eat roast-beef—plenty. You much comfortable. You see my fine clothes to-morrow." Vehemently did he adjure the sailors to row hard, alternately threatening them, and making them promises. We had arrived within a few yards of the harbour-mouth, when the signal-gun pealed. Poor Elias ground his teeth, muttered "Sacresti," and in another moment, without further observation, folded his cloak about him,

lay down on the deck, and composed himself to sleep. I could not follow his example. We had at last arrived at Athens, and yet were not allowed to tread her soil. For some hours I watched the lights on the shores of the Peiræus. A few ships were moored near us, and now we heard a chain rattle, and now the rigging strain. A light burned in the prow of a fishing-boat further off; and a laugh and a song come to us by fits across the dim and glassy sea. Every sound was significant, and the silence that succeeded the last seemed the suspended breath of expectation. Exhausted at last, I lay down on the stones in the bottom of the boat, and in a few minutes was asleep. I woke early in the morning, and rose at once. The cold, pale lights of dawn lay in streaks and flakes on the pearly main, and mildly and sadly revealed the green hill that cut it, leaving the remoter landscape in a gentle gloom. Athens was invisible, but not its crown. Fronting the dawn, and relieved against a dark sky, stood the Acropolis and the Parthenon.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ACROPOLIS OF ATHENS.

Relation of the Acropolis to Athens—Dimensions of the Acropolis—  
The Walls of Themistocles—The Propylea—The Temple of "Victory  
without Wings"—The Parthenon—The Panathenaic Procession—  
Fragmentary Sculpture.

You will easily believe that my first visit at Athens, was to the Acropolis. As Athens was the intellectual centre, and remains to this day the great exponent of Greece, so was the Acropolis, crowned with its votive temples and commemorative sculptures, the high imaginative embodiment of Athens itself. It was Athens idealised ; exhibited as it lived in the imagination of an Athenian, and as it has survived in the heart of the world. Whatever existed in the city below stood revealed in a more glorious unity, and free from all encumbering pettiness of detail, in the city above. There Art was represented by the noblest works of Phidias. There



war was represented by the defensive Propylea, the Minerva Promachos, and the golden shields with which (the offerings of successive conquerors returning from many a well-fought field) the eastern end of the Parthenon was adorned. There commerce was represented in the sacred Treasury, included within the walls of the Parthenon. There the most sacred traditions and religious affections were represented ; for there, amid other memorials, was the olive-tree which rose out of the earth at the command of Minerva, when she contended in rivalry with Neptune ;— the mystic plant, parent of every tree that supplied the home of each Athenian with its frugal repast, or lighted the lamp beside his hearth. It was thus that everything great and noble at Athens found a representative in the aerial city that crowned the Acropolis : but on that sacred height there was no demagogue feeding the people with wind ; no judicial tribunal commending the hemlock-cup to the lips of Socrates ; no populace sending Themistocles into banishment ; no idlers enquiring for

“some new thing,” when a man of Macedon was dictating terms to Athens and to Greece. The pictures of the middle ages are frequently divided into two compartments, a terrestrial and a celestial, and the deeds enacted in the lower division by men yet in the flesh, are contemplated from above by a company of Spirits assoiled from the taint of mortality. It was thus that the Acropolitan Athens’ kept watch from its region of peace, over the Athens of the plain. Its marble gods, demigods, and heroes constituted the chorus that looked down upon the drama acted from day to day beneath their feet, and approved or disapproved.

Knowing that the lesser ever receives its interpretation from the greater, I resolved to make myself well acquainted with the treasures of the Acropolis before I explored the rest of Athens. I would advise every traveller to adopt the same course, but to do so at his leisure, not allowing his imagination to become unduly excited, or his spirits to be flurried. The great art of seeing things in travel consists in the management

of the mind. If we visit an interesting spot without having read or thought enough about it to render the mind apprehensive, we either miss its historical interest altogether, or are reduced to study our guide book, when we should be looking around us, and to learn our lesson instead of enjoying our feast.' If on the other hand we have thought over the matter too eagerly, and too often, the reality is sure to fall short of our expectation.

Experience had taught me many such lessons as these ; and when I set out for the Acropolis it was with a firm resolution of turning my back upon it at the last moment, if any unlucky chance seemed likely to interfere with a leisurely inspection of it. How often has a sharp wind, a shower of rain, a deficiency of time, or an idle and troublesome companion, prevented a traveller from being able to profit by an opportunity never again to be offered ! The worst calamity perhaps which can happen to him, is that of falling in with an exploring party, who have already spread their luncheon in the

midst of the ruins—cold meat and warm wine, and English porter at three shillings a bottle! When such a disaster occurs, a speedy retreat on the part of the intruder is the only remedy. On this occasion however everything turned out propitiously. The wind which the day before had been 'chilled by the snows of the mountains, came from the sea, fresh at once and warm. The spring flowers were already rising in thick tufts on the grassy slopes, including most of those which grow in our gardens, and everything told me that the hour was auspicious.

If there existed nothing worth seeing, in Greece except the Acropolis of Athens, and if the way thither were a wilderness, it would still be one of the spots on earth most worthy of a pilgrimage. It might indeed be better never to see it than to see it only once or twice, and with feelings as tumultuous as under such circumstances would naturally be those of a man treading the ground trodden of old by the greatest Poets, Philosophers, Orators, and Statesmen whom the world has ever seen. To wander

there repeatedly, however, to enjoy a silence broken but by voices from the past, to idle there and then to explore, to sleep there in the sunshine and to waken suddenly, to forget where you are and to be accidentally reminded of it by the first object on which your eye rests, to see your own old thoughts rising up from behind prostrate pillar or broken frieze, and beckoning you on toward a company of better thoughts but half your own—this is to visit the Acropolis, and for this few efforts would be too great.

I will begin my description of the Acropolis in a very prosaic way, namely by stating its dimensions. It is an oval hill which ascends to the height of about two hundred feet, the summit being a thousand feet long by half that breadth. At two thirds of the elevation the green sod ceases, and in its place the rock rises perpendicularly like a rampart, until it blends with the walls of the fortress. The stones of those walls are so large as to harmonise with the masses of rock that support them ; but they are too carefully wrought to allow of your mistaking them for

rock. I was much impressed on observing in the wall at one side of the Acropolis, fragments of fluted columns, inserted as building stones, as well as pieces of cornice, triglyphs and metopes, with here and there, broken fragments of sculpture. We are reminded of men more vividly by the accidental obstacles with which they had to contend than by the labours which, without let or hindrance, embodied designs conceived in the stillness of thought. Themistocles was brought before me with the strength of reality as my eye fell on this part of the fortress, and I remembered that he had been compelled by the necessities of the time to build in haste, using as materials whatever came to hand, especially the fragments of the temple of Minerva, overthrown by the Persians, and replaced by the Parthenon. The greatest works of human genius have thus been ever in part extempore and occasional works. They have been rooted in the need of the hour, though their blossom renews itself from year to year ; and to the end of time with their philosophical or

artistic worth an historical interest is blended. Men of ambitious imaginations retire into their study and devise some "*magnum opus*" which, like the world itself, is to be created out of nothing, and to hang self-balanced on its own centre :—after much puffing, however, the world which they produce is apt to turn out but a well-sized bubble. Men of another order labour but to provide for some practical need ; and their work, humble, perhaps occasional in its design, is found to contain the elements that make human toils indestructible. Homer sang, no doubt, in part to kindle patriotism among his countrymen, in part to amuse his village audience, and in part to procure a good night's lodging, as he wandered on Grecian and Asiatic shores ; but the great Idea of his song was stout enough notwithstanding to fight its way through all obstructions, and to orb itself out into completeness. Shakespeare wrote in part for practical objects of a less elevated nature ; Hooker's Ecclesiastical ~~Policy~~ was intended to compose the strifes of the ~~time~~ ; and Burke's great work on the French

Revolution was but thrown out as a bastion to protect the British citadel from French jacobinism ; although, working in haste and prodigal of his wealth, he inserted into it many a passage of poetry or philosophy too good for its place—passages in one sense as misapplied as the fragments of sculpture in the wall of Themistocles.

After mounting a long but not a steep ascent, I reached the Propylea, or entrance to the fortress. This building was raised a little more than half a century after the battle of Marathon, and was intended by Pericles simply to serve as a defensive gate to the interior of the citadel ; but the genius of its architect, Mnesicles, rendered it a structure hardly less remarkable than the Parthenon itself. The summit of the former building is on a level with the base of the latter. Stuart has represented it very correctly in his drawings, and Colonel Leake not less so in his description ; though I believe that both of them were indebted for their knowledge of the building exclusively to



Pausanias, whose account of it was, fortunately, minute. It is certain, at least, that at the conclusion of the war, not a stone of the Propylea was visible ; indeed, the labourers had dug four feet through the rubbish before they reached the cornice and capitals. This building consists of a Doric portico, sixty feet wide, the columns, which are six in number, being about thirty feet high. Behind them,—not parallel to them, however, but placed at right angles, and stationed at each side of the way into the interior,—is a range of Ionic pillars. The portico is flanked by two buildings, nearly square, projecting considerably in advance of it, and built likewise of Pentelican marble. These buildings were originally picture-galleries, and the paintings of Polygnotus adorned their storied walls. What would we not give to be able to restore but one of those pictures and compare it with the specimens of ancient painting disinterred at Pompeii ? The rubbish so long accumulated ~~about~~ the Propylea has, in one respect, discharged as friendly an office as the lava, to which

we are indebted for the conservation of so much at Herculaneum ; it has preserved for its columns and ruined walls a purity of whiteness absolutely dazzling, when the sun shines upon them. Those columns are nearly perfect. Around them lie fragments of their capitals, as well as of the architrave and frieze, the vast size of which imparts to them a character of imposing grandeur. One of them, which I measured, is twenty-five feet in length ; and though it belonged to the summit of the building, its minutest details are finished with a perfection which would have wearied a Chinese carver in ivory.

A little to the right of the Propylea, and on a platform slightly elevated, stands another Temple, that of the “ Wingless Victory,” released from darkness, like a captive set free, since the conclusion of the war. Pericles built this small but exquisite structure on the Acropolis, to intimate that the most wandering of the divinities had taken her permanent stand on that spot. A boast is commonly made better in spoken words than in written, and should, least

of all, be written in a material so intractable and unchangeable as marble : notwithstanding, Pericles, if he were called to account, would be able to make a good defence ; for Athens succeeded in raising an empire, the only terrestrial one which has proved permanent, and one which daily pushes its frontiers further out—that of Mind. The wingless Victory enjoyed a prospect which might have atoned to her for the loss of her plumes. She gazed right over the bay of Salamis, where, some forty years before, she had touched the fleet of Xerxes, in passing, with a flying hand ; and she beheld the Island of Egina, in the caverns of which the Athenians had hidden their wives and children when they abandoned their capital. Contented she may have been ; and yet when a wind much less rough as a wooer than that which carried off Orithyia, blew from the purple mountains of the Morea, and made the “ wine-black ” sea flash in the sun, the Goddess must sometimes have longed for her wings again, that she might cast herself upon it. Wheeler and Spon saw this

temple in the seventeenth century. At the time of Stuart it had so completely disappeared, that men doubted whether it had existed in modern times. The Archæological Society succeeded in ascertaining the exact spot specified by Pausanias, and, removing the rubbish, found almost every part of the temple perfect. It had been thrown down to make way for a Turkish battery ; but no injury had been done to the fragments, and after a careful study of the plan, no difficulty was experienced in restoring the building. It consists of a small but beautifully proportioned cella, graced with four Ionic pillars at each end. Its frieze was decorated with sculptures commemorative of the battle of Marathon.

Leaving this temple to the right, I continued to advance, ascending along the ancient ground of the Acropolis, which is now laid bare. On I strayed among fallen capitals and fragments of columns bathed in the sunshine, many of them so large, that I could but just see over them, and not a few embossed with sculpture or covered with inscriptions. All around lay

triglyphs and metopes, trunks of centaurs, heads of horses, manes of lions, and among them the workers of the ruin—flattened cannon-balls, and splinters of Turkish shells. In a few moments I stood before the Parthenon. Its western front, the first part on which my eye rested, is almost wholly uninjured. The pillars are perfect, the architrave and cornice equally so ; and a few of the sculptures between the triglyphs still remain. The pediment has sustained but little damage, and still retains possession of the two colossal statues which resisted all Lord Elgin's efforts to remove them. They formed a part of that great composition in which Phidias represented the contest of Minerva and Neptune for Athens,—a contest probably symbolical of a question which may one day have divided Athenian statesmen, namely, whether the State which they moulded ought to seek her supremacy at sea or by land. The group within the eastern pediment represented the birth of **Minerva** ; and the ninety-two compartments of the **frieze**, which surrounded the temple, illus-

trated her achievements, and those of the early Athenian heroes whom she had guided and inspired. The character of Minerva was certainly the noblest conception of Greek religion. Whether we consider her mystical birth, as the glorious apparition proceeded all-perfect and mature from the head of the Father of Gods and men, her virgin estate, her serene valour resisting all aggression, or her sacred and practical wisdom, we trace in this mythic idea a faint approximation to one yet more exalted, that of the Christian Church as contemplated by the mind of early Christendom. That the Athenians should have chosen for their patroness a divinity with whose austere sanctitude they had, perhaps, less in common than with any other of the deities, is a remarkable instance of the fact that men admire most the qualities in which they are most deficient. Such however was the case. The Parthenon was so called from the Goddess to whom Athens and all it contained was dedicated, and means "the Temple of the Virgin."

Passing under the peristyle, you reach the cella or body of the temple, in the west end of which, the Athenian treasury was kept, while in the eastern end, or sanctuary, the colossal statue of the goddess, wrought by Phidias in ivory and gold, was enshrined. It was around this cella that the most beautiful of relievos, the Panathenaic procession, was ranged. Though we possess in the British Museum so large a part of it, another portion still holds its ground where it has a better right to be, and the western end of the cella, at least, continues undefrauded and inviolate. The members of the frieze which remain are exactly the same in spirit as those on which your eye rests every day that you are at home ; and the hospitality which you had afforded to those strangers " from a far countree " made me feel, when I saw their companions, as if I were meeting old friends. There they stood as in the days of old, when their placid aspect tranquillised many a heart disquieted by the last news from the Peloponnesian war ;—Priests

walking in procession with steps attuned to harmonies unheard by us ;—venerable elders, and beautiful matrons seated in attributes of sedate repose, yet incapable of lassitude, calmly observant of the ceremonial, or engaged in slow but earnest converse ;—warriors holding horses by the head, or balanced on them with a pliant grace, as though man and horse had constituted “Like the feigned Centaur, but one animal ;—” youths dragging forward bulls that plant their feet resolutely before them, as if they smelt their own blood on the ground, and low against the skies ;—little boys, modest, tractable, and orderly, who console themselves apparently for an unusual constraint, by a deep conviction that on their discretion, the success of the rite mainly depends ;—and here and there

“Shaggy goats that eye the mountain top  
Askance, and riot with reluctant horn.”

I was interested by observing on the walls, in many places, the remains of the paint with which they were once adorned. It was at one time the fashion to extol the ancients for the



purity of their taste in contemning the coloured decorations which we moderns rejoice in. The fact has turned out, on more minute inquiry, to have been far otherwise. The Greeks were by no means purists ; and though of course nothing that they produced was tawdry in effect, the greater portion of their temples was painted, both within and without, with a large variety of colours. Their idol-statues (those to which they attached peculiar religious honours at least) were also coloured in the hair, the eyes, and the dress. Such colouring however was, assuredly, no barbarous imitation of life, but aimed at an ideal effect ; and probably, without being out of harmony with nature, it invested the image with a supernatural character, and struck the beholder with awe.

How lamentable that this temple, which for so many centuries had triumphed over time, should at last have been so mutilated and maimed ! A single shell which fell upon its roof during the Venetian siege destroyed what ages

had spared ; and though the two ends of the building and much of the sides are tolerably perfect, the centre part of the structure suffered in a moment what many a year will not restore. Among the ruins, as I roamed through the scene of devastation, lay a few fragments of the frieze, belonging, for the most part, to the southern side. Such remains, you will naturally suppose, broken as those beautiful sculptures commonly were, to have presented but a melancholy spectacle ; the fact, however, was far otherwise, and this is assuredly not the least among the triumphs of the Phidian art. So profound was the serenity of expression which characterised these fragments of sculpture, that it seemed to accord equally with all fortunes. That tranquillity was not noticeable in the head only, but manifested itself, where the head no longer existed, in every limb and gesture ; and the eternal repose of those shattered relics as they lay there in the sun, challenged rather envy than compassion. Fragmentary sculpture has its own especial value, and among the losses

sustained by art, as in all other losses, the law of compensation prevails. What is thus lost in completeness is often gained in pathos. It is also to be remembered that the beauty of the human form in detail, is only to be appreciated when its different portions are presented to us separately. Under more fortunate circumstances the details are lost in the whole, and the head will not let the eye wander to the extremities.

The beauty of fragmentary sculpture was on this occasion singularly brought home to me by an accident. As I wandered about the Acropolis, I found, on a part where some remains had lately been dug up, a marble foot, which enchanted me by its perfection of form. Had it been the foot of the "silver-footed Goddess," who ran along the waves of the sea, it could not in its dazzling radiance and multitudinous curves have expressed a more winged lightness or a more pliant grace. As I gazed on it it seemed to reveal as much of physiognomic character as Lavater could have found in the countenance he had studied most minutely.

More than once I laid it down, and returned to it again, to indulge in one glance more. It gained upon me ; the nymph-like foot gradually suggested the hand, and that again the curved and placid brow. Again and again I imagined what must have been the form which that benign, frank, joyous, and immaculate foot supported,—that foot which contained so much more than I ever before knew was to be found in a foot. I was obliged at last, by the interruption of some labourers, to lay aside both my reverie and that which had occasioned it. Mine, however, was not the only reverie that has rested on a slender foundation. Just such a foot is the world we inhabit, as revealed to our senses, and to our faculty conversant with sense. Our philosophers are very prompt to draw inferences as to the whole, from that lower portion of the moral world which stands upon the level of their apprehension ; but, until the delineations which they draw resemble each other, I suppose we shall always doubt as to the authenticity

of that complete image which they so fluently describe.

After examining the Parthenon in detail, I contemplated it often from a distance, and with an admiration ever increasing. There is a simple and unassuming majesty in those grave Doric temples, which sinks more deeply into the mind the more steadily we regard them. The perfection of their proportions is also such as a transient or careless glance will not detect. Few persons, for this reason, are aware of one important circumstance, to which the ancient temple owed much of that complete and satisfactory beauty which pleases even those who have not discovered the cause of their pleasure, and the absence of which gives a harsh, raw, mechanic aspect to many a building intended to be an exact copy of it. I allude to the circumstance that its outlines, instead of being rectilinear, are, in a very slight degree, curvilinear. On closely studying the Parthenon I observed that in base and cornice alike there is at each side a slight elevation toward the centre. Every

pillar swells also at its middle, and all of them bend also inwards in a slight degree, those at the corners slanting diagonally toward the centre of the building. In the whole temple, in fact, which thus leans in on itself and slightly swells upward, there is not a single perfectly straight line. It was with Greek architecture as with Greek poetry ;—there was, in each, a perfection of proportion which is felt rather than seen, and which defies the imitation of those who can only measure mechanically with plummet and square. The Madeleine of Paris is no more a Greek temple than a tragedy of Racine is a tragedy of Sophocles.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ACROPOLIS OF ATHENS.

Temple of Minerva Polias—The Relics it once contained—The Porch of the Caryatides—The Theatre of Herodes Atticus—Cave of Pan—Cave of Aglaurus—Tragic Theatre of Athens—The Acropolis as it once was—View from the Acropolis—Lycabettus—Spirit of Athenian Religion.

THE Parthenon, though the noblest temple, was not the most revered sanctuary on the Acropolis. In this respect Athens resembled many cities of modern Europe, the largest church in which, though without a rival as to wealth and beauty, is yet in dignity inferior to some smaller building of an earlier time. St. Peter's, for example, is not the cathedral of Rome; both St. John Lateran, and Santa Maria Maggiore, take precedence of it; and the glorious Duomo of Milan is less venerated than the church which preserves the memorials of St. Ambrose and St. Augustin. The Temple of Minerva Polias, which

stands to the north of the Parthenon, not far from the edge of the rock, was conceived to be the especial haunt of the Goddess, who had taken the city under her protection in the legendary time of King Cecrops, when Gods and men mixed familiarly together, and Mars himself underwent trial for homicide before the court of Areopagus. It was in that temple, built on the site of a yet earlier one, that the statue of Minerva, made of olive-wood and supposed to have fallen from heaven, was preserved; a statue probably far more venerated than the colossal divinity which Phidias placed in the Parthenon. There also burned the lamp which was never extinguished, and which was replenished with oil but once a year. It was to that temple that the sacred veil was brought from Eleusis by the Pan-athenaic procession. In that temple the mystic serpent of the Acropolis had his abode; in it were preserved the throne of Xerxes, and the sword of Mardonius. But it had memorials also of an earlier and holier time. It enshrined the tomb of Erectheus, one of the Athenian



kings, and it commemorated the contest between Minerva and Neptune. It contained the sacred olive, which rose from the earth at the command of the Goddess, and which sprung up again after the Persians had burned the fane; and in the votive chapel dedicated to Pandrosus, it enclosed the salt spring which leaped from the rock when Neptune struck the ground with his trident.

The Temple of Minerva Polias, or, as it is sometimes called, the Erechtheum, is of Ionic architecture, nor has there ever existed a more perfect specimen of that graceful order. In length it is seventy-three feet, and in breadth thirty-seven, measuring the interior cella, without counting the portico of six pillars at the eastern end. Another portico of four pillars in front, with two retiring pillars, adorned the northern side of the building. At the opposite side is the beautiful porch of the Caryatides, in which Virgins attired in the religious costume of the Panathenaic solemnity take the place of pillars, and support the projecting cornice on their

broad and sedate brows, which in that cornice seem rather to wear a crown than to sustain a burthen. I was much impressed by the pathetic beauty of this silent sisterhood. Of the original six, four remain unsubverted: a fifth was discovered among the ruins,—unfortunately, however, without a head; and the sixth enjoys the British Protectorate. Let us hope that it will one day be restored and take its stand among its “companions equal-aged” for another period of two thousand years before it is again reduced to that necessity from which in barbarous times statues are no more exempt than exiled princes—a necessity of seeing the world.

The loss of this Caryatis, when Lord Elgin carried it off, occasioned more disturbance of heart at Athens than the removal of the frieze of the Parthenon. The rights of hospitality were violated, as the Athenians thought, by the summary mode in which their captive guest was removed from the abode which had sheltered her so long beneath a sky not less temperate than that of Phrygia; and perhaps they deemed

a gallery in the cloudy north but a dungeon compared with the mild prison in which they had so long detained her. The strength of their feeling on this subject is attested by a belief which prevails to this day among the people, a belief that on the night of her second captivity her five remaining sisters were heard to lament with loud sobbings her fate and their own loss. All night long, as the story goes, the voice of lamentation was echoed among the pillars and wafted eastward over the sea ; nor was it till the next morning that the sacred breasts of the mourners were revisited by their ancient peace, and that the beams of the rising sun dried the tears upon their stony faces. The legend at least proves that the Athenians have not wholly lost that poetic spirit which called temples and statues into existence when they slept in the quarries of Pentelicus.

Considerable progress has been made in the restoration of the temples on the Acropolis, and there is no reason why that noble work should not one day be completed. The king, on his first

visit to the Acropolis, promised that he would, if it should ever be in his power, restore it to what it had once been. Want of funds has proved the great obstacle, hitherto, to this pious undertaking. Why was not a European subscription raised for the restoration of that which has ever been the intellectual metropolis of Europe, as Rome was, for so many centuries, its religious metropolis, and in the good estate of which the children of all climes have nearly an equal interest? Why have not the wealthy English (those who, in the appropriately religious language of the day, are "blessed with opulence") by whom Athens has been visited since its independence, devoted to a purpose which, while it effected a nobler object, would also have worthily commemorated their names, a few hundreds out of the thousands which they spend annually in sordid luxuries or vain display? The cost would, it is asserted, be by no means considerable. Should these temples ever be restored they would constitute the most suitable receptacles for the sculpture which

sooner or later is sure of being discovered beneath the soil of Greece. They would, at least, furnish the most appropriate asylum for the statues disinterred in Attica. The other cities of Greece might, perhaps, claim to be the depositories of the sculpture found in their respective neighbourhoods ; and, indeed, it would be advisable to encourage a local spirit of emulation on the subject. If the Parthenon, when restored, could not fitly be made the Cathedral of Athens, like the Roman courts of Justice, which were thus consecrated to religion, when the heathen had become part of the inheritance of the Church,—and for such a destination the inappropriate character of its sculpture would perhaps make it unsuitable—it should remain, at least, a Temple of Art, which, inclusively, it always was. It should never, however, be crammed ; and the neighbouring temples should have their share of the precious relics.

I have often thought with how much more advantage we should study works of art if they were lodged in a number of separate receptacles,

various in size and in architecture, than crowded together as they so commonly are in a single gallery, such as the Louvre, without any rational method or order, whether based upon subject, era, or school, and placed so close to each other that we cannot contemplate a martyrdom of St. Agnes without the eye wandering on to a Callisto or a Danae. Impression thus destroys impression; or, rather, it may be said, that a deep impression can never thus be formed. It would not have been more impossible for the age of Cimabue to have produced a Guido than it is for a man to appreciate a picture by the former just after he has been contemplating one by the latter. Really to understand a work of art requires a state of mind at least, if not a habit of mind, corresponding with that of the artist. Such a state is formed with difficulty, and is speedily erased—especially if the mind be susceptible—by antagonistic impressions. That the character of a genuine work of art should be discerned by one whose imagination is tossed backward and forward by the appeals and

counter-appeals of our heterogeneous collections is as impossible as that the face of nature should be reflected in waves as clearly as in still water.

Even in those equivocal publications, books of extracts, a certain degree of order is observed, and the reader is not expected to relish alternate morsels of King Lear and of Hudibras, or to season Paradise Lost with Lalla Rookh. Our collections of Art are books of extracts put together with a more vulgar promiscuousness. Until, in these matters, we acquire a little rational sensibility we must admit that pictures and statues are, with us, rather a matter of pride than of imaginative or moral delight; and that we consider them less as objects of affection than as part of the furniture of a great city. The several buildings in which works of art are enshrined, ought, however, though separate, to be near each other, that the student may be able to pass easily from one to another; and should, if possible, group together, forming a city of their own—a city of immortality, like that “city of the dead,” which in so many an Italian

“Campo Santo” adjoins the city of the living. Nature has seldom facilitated such a design as she does in the instance of the Athenian Acropolis ; there are, however, even in our northern cities, sites which suggest this high destination, as in the case of Edinburgh, where the Calton Hill presents a “Mons Sacer” worthy of sustaining a great nation’s treasures of art, as well as her historical monuments. London is less fortunate ; and though she may build a palace of art, she has no site wholly appropriate to it. Let us hope, however, that even if the Elgin marbles and the stuffed birds are destined to remain for ever beneath one roof, as in a common sense, “curiosities,” the present dusty auction rooms and dingy vaults of Trafalgar Square will one day give place to a Gallery, in which each school of art is allowed a room to itself. We have many a picture, each of which deserves as much.

Hitherto the remains of ancient sculpture discovered in Greece since its independence have not been of very high value. There is,



however, nothing discouraging in this circumstance, for as yet no sufficient search has been made for them. The Acropolis indeed, has been effectually probed, and not without important, though not always fortunate results. The excavations made there, have in one respect done much harm, in consequence of the stupidity and petty economy with which they have been conducted. The rubbish dug up, has in some places been thrown over the side of the steep, instead of being removed to a distance; the consequence of which is that where the rock once rose like a wall there exists now but an unmeaning slope. How much the apparent elevation, and the grandeur of a hill depends on its shape, must have been felt by anyone who has visited the most beautiful city to the north of the Alps—Edinburgh, and observed that mountainous character which is imparted to the “Salisbury Crags,” and to “Arthur’s Seat” by their shape and geological formation. Whenever excavations are carried out on a large scale in Greece, it is impossible but that many remains of

antiquity will be discovered. We shall probably be indebted for yet more such to the progress of agriculture ; for who can doubt that when the plains of Argos, Elis, Epidaurus, &c., are turned up, they will yield something besides corn crops ? The Romans, the chief pillagers of the world, carried off no doubt multitudes of statues—indeed in the time of Trajan it was a common saying, that at Rome there were as many marble statues as human beings. They never, however, contemplated art except with a horny eye “fat with pride” and dim with the lust of conquest, and they probably left untouched not a few of the best works. Like many a modern “Milord” they would have been determined by names in their selection of their prey ; and the old Greek, who, like the modern Italian, boasted that he was “molto astuto,” would soon have hit on the device of making his best statues submit to an alias or an incognito. The Turks, probably, carried on the work of destruction most fiercely when their religious zeal burned most brightly ; and at a later period,


they are said to have occasionally shot the heads of statues out of their cannons for want of better ammunition. A little sacrilege of this sort would be very useful among us now and then. He would be no small benefactor to art who cleansed the Pantheon of St. Paul's ; and turned Westminster Abbey back into a church !

The remains of the many buildings that once adorned the base, and lower slope of the Acropolis, give one at the present day but a poor conception of the glorious spectacle which every morning saluted the eye of an Athenian. Of these the most considerable is the Theatre of Herodes Atticus. It belongs to a comparatively late period, and boasts little of that purity, or beauty which belongs to the early Greek models. One rejoices, notwithstanding, to find that the liberality of a foreigner and a philosopher continues to preserve his memory. In the rock beneath the citadel there are two caves, each of which retains a legendary fame. One of them was that dedicated to Pan, in gratitude for the aid which he rendered to the Athenians at

the battle of Marathon. The other is supposed to be the Sacred Cave of Aglaurus, one of the daughters of Cecrops, the first king of Attica, who led thither an Egyptian colony about the year B.C. 1556. There is a legend respecting Aglaurus, (the sister of Pandrosos) according to which Mercury, displeased at the jealousy with which she watched his love for her sister Herse, turned her into a stone. Another legend states that she leaped from the summit of the rock, and by thus offering up her life, delivered her country. It was in this cave that the Athenian youths were first clad in arms by the State which they vowed to defend ; to them, therefore, it was as the chapel in which the Christian Knight kept vigil beside his armour during the night on which he was dedicated to his chivalrous mission. Above this cave stand two pillars, the sole remnants of a ruined building.


But the most interesting of all the remains on the slopes of the Acropolis, is that of the temple of Bacchus,—the great Tragic theatre of Athens. This theatre is said to have held

30,000 spectators, a statement, however, to which it is difficult to give credence. Some remains still exist of its steps hewn in the rock at the southern side of the Acropolis ; but the Pentelic marble with which its seats were covered has disappeared, like the countless statues with which it was decorated. Ranged along those stone seats the Athenians witnessed the tragedies of Sophocles and Æschylus, performed with all the solemnities of a grave religious ceremonial ; while incense ascended from the altar of Bacchus, the Lord of the Passions and the inspirer of tragic song. If their eyes wandered, it was to a scene which had been the theatre of events more glorious than any connected with the fated house of Atreus or of Labdacus. Before them lay their own element, the sea, encircling Egina, and Salamis fatal to Xerxes. Even such remembrances are not always attended with triumph. In that theatre the day that the Peloponnesian war was concluded by the complete submission of the Athenians, when Lysander had demolished the fortifications which Themistocles



had erected, the Athenian people witnessed the *Electra* of Euripides. That day was the anniversary of the battle of Salamis, won seventy-six years before, and had ever been kept as a chief festival. The contrast between the glory of Agamemnon, who alone had ruled the hosts of united Greece, and the exile of his orphan daughter, suddenly struck the Athenians as paralleled only by their own fate ;—and the audience melted into tears. Of all the spectacles which the Temple of Bacchus witnessed, that must surely have been the most pathetic. To the stranger visiting the spot the remembrance is perhaps the most salutary moral connected with the Greek drama. He needs such an admonition, for at Athens even the stranger is proud.

Leaving the temple of Bacchus I resolved to ascend the Acropolis once more, before the shades of evening closed around it. I had looked on it, in all docility and submission, as it is ; and I should have been glad to have seen it, (might imagination but carry one so far) as it once was. As I advanced from that Tragic



theatre I endeavoured to people once more the slopes of the Acropolis with that marvellous array of buildings which covered them in old time, cresting every prominent part of a rock the base of which cannot measure less than 2000 feet by 1000. In that glorious array stood many a building devoted to public business, or pleasure: temples, altars, and Choragic monuments, that is to say, pillars or small temples, crowned with the tripod which was dedicated to Bacchus by each Athenian citizen who had at his own cost maintained a chorus to which the prize had been adjudged. A street lined with these trophies and votive offerings had once borne the name of the street of tripods. The only memorial of it that remains is that beautiful little building usually called the lantern of Demosthenes, but in reality a Choragic monument.

Having completed the ascent I walked once more from one end of the Acropolis to the other, in my imagination restoring the ruins, and endeavouring to see all

things as Pericles saw them, perhaps the day before the pestilence set in at Athens. What a spectacle must that have been, and what a time to be the leader of a people! At least six temples once stood on that sacred platform besides those which we now behold. In the midst of them were ranged innumerable altars, tripods, and historic monuments. Pausanias tells us that in his day there remained three thousand statues, after Nero had carried off as many as he needed for the adornment of that "Golden House" which princes trembled to enter. All round the platform on which these temples stood, and girdling it with their mythic and historic zone of marble, ran the Cyclopean walls that guarded the sacred temenos. Those walls were carved in relief, with sculptures, the designs of Phidias, representing the Giant Wars, the battle of the Amazons, the achievements of the great national hero, Theseus, and the records that belonged to the legendary age of Athens; that age in which her historic glories still lay fermenting and undeveloped in her bosom.



and from the memory of which the Athenian ever gained fresh inspiration. Above all, there in the centre, stood the Parthenon, itself the embodied image and statue of perfect majesty. On its eastern front hung those golden shields (the traces of which still remain) which caught, every morning, the light of the rising sun; and beside it stood the statue of Minerva Promachos, seventy feet in height, the tutelary genius of Athens, gazing far off over the subject sea, and sustaining a spear, the golden summit of which, like the crest of her helmet, was seen by ships doubling the promontory of Sunium.

The Acropolis itself hardly interested me more than the views which extended thence before me from every part of its boundary. Immediately below lay the city with all its beautiful ruins. Beyond it spread some gracefully moulded hills, one only of which, Lycabettus, or the "hill of light," which is higher than the Acropolis, reaches any considerable elevation. The rest are just lofty

enough to give importance to a temple, or to be crowned by a legend. They are sufficient to attract the attention, and to prompt the imagination, without engrossing either. How well such a situation suited the artistic character of the Athenian mind ; and how much the better because nothing in the immediate neighbourhood was imposing enough to absorb that mind or to control it ! Athens was the kingdom of Art, not of Nature : Nature is there but the foundation of Art, while Art is the adornment and completion of Nature, who receives more than she gives, and is content with her portion. The green mound on which the Temple of Theseus stands would be nothing if it did not lift that temple into purer light ; and the rock of the Arcopagus was not lofty enough to dwarf the dignity of the court installed upon it. On the summit of Lycabettus the Athenians built nothing. We can easily guess the reason of this. It is too sharp to afford a majestic foundation, and so high that the temple raised on it would not have been distinctly seen.

The Romans, in their earlier and more religious days, would have crowned that hill with a Fane dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and consulted the auguries thence, at the commencement of each new war. In their decline, an Emperor would have surmounted it with his own statue cast in gold. The Egyptians would have hewn it into a pyramid, and made its shadow an allegory. In modern Italy it would have been hollowed into a cell for a hermit, who some centuries ago would have knelt there, telling his beads by the light of a setting moon; and in later times would have enjoyed there his noon-tide siesta, and kept a charitable flask of "Virgin's lac" for the benefit of dusty travellers. The English would have planted a windmill on it—urged by that impulse which compels nations to illustrate their character by the works of their hands, and often to leave in those works a caricature of their own moral features.

And yet, on their small scale, nothing can be more exquisitely lovely, in shape than the hills

immediately around Athens, enamelled as they are in spring with a profusion of flowers not always to be found at that season in the trim pleasure-grounds of less favoured lands. The longer I looked on those hills, the finer seemed their infinite sweetness of outline. Farther off, the objects that met my eye were noble in character; on one side extended Hymettus, on the other Parnes, between and beyond both, Pentelicus. So regular in outline are the long level ranges of these mountains (formed as if for the winds to run races on them), that, notwithstanding their size, the impression they convey is not one of mountain wildness, but of serene elevation, placid strength, and severe majesty. On the south lies the sea, so distant that you see it only in its calm expanse, and yet so near that it loses nothing of the purple light which flashes from its ripple or streams along its tides.

The Acropolis strikes the key-note of all the visual harmonies around it, and interprets all things, from the palm-tree that waves its plumes

beside Athenian walls, to the blue horizon of the sea, and the snowy mountain. It was when I looked beyond it that I understood it. In name it was a religious sanctuary; in original intention a citadel; but in essential character it was a giant altar, and the divinity served there was the Spirit of Beauty—the spirit that created Greek mythology, that inspired Greek poetry, that organised Greek society, that methodised Greek philosophy, and that has preserved from confusion and corruption the complex tissue of Greek history. On that altar, and in honour of that divinity, temples themselves were offered as sacrificial gifts, and with them whatever else the Athenians esteemed of highest worth, the works of their chief artists, the monuments of their bravest actions, the statues and the trophies of their greatest men. This worship of Beauty, indeed, aspired to be, and believed that it was, something more and higher; if it had not so aspired, it never, never would have been as high a thing as it became. To have been called “a nation of

artists and slaves" would have been as repugnant to the Athenians in the former as in the latter count of the indictment. They were no race of connoisseurs or amateurs, substituting virtù for virtue, prating of art and antiquity, and governed by Punchinello and the foreigner. They built to their gods. Had they been mere devotees of Art they might have aspired to build, but assuredly the heavy masses of the Parthenon would never have toiled up the rugged ascent of the Acropolis. Not only did they build to their gods, but they built especially to the severer and the more venerable among them; and most remarkable is it that, while Beauty was their real inspiration, no temple rose on the Acropolis to the Goddess of Beauty. It is thus that in the region of moral, as of physical things, the centre of gravity is an impalpable point, and that the focus round which our thoughts, even the most eccentric of them, revolve in their orbits, while its position may be inferred by a scientific process, remains unrevealed to the eye.

The Athenians have by some been called the most religious of the Greek nations ; I have often doubted whether they were not the least so ; but there is a sense in which the two positions will not be at variance. They were the most spiritual in imagination, because they possessed the widest and most soaring imagination ; but their heart was too vagrant to be religious, and their will was not strong enough for that most aspiring and most sustained of the energies. They were liberal in the admission of divinities, but lax in obedience to them :—never, perhaps, were a people on such easy terms with their gods. In worship they were assiduous ; indeed they thought they never could see too much of their gods ; and that the rather because the more they saw of them the more they could talk them over, as they supposed, getting at once what they desired, and escaping what they feared. Their type in this respect might have been the infant Mercury, who stole the lyre of Apollo, and hid away the thunderbolt of Jove, with the aid of

ingenuity, loquacity, and a graceful impudence. Between the rival divinities they divided the prize ; they gave to Minerva their imagination, and to Venus their heart ; and where they felt least they were most eloquent in discourse. Yet, in their earlier period, they must have been really religious. The religious affections have frequently cooled down, before the costliest offerings have been laid on the altars of religion, and great temples have been, perhaps, not more often the expression of an existing devotion than the monuments of a faith in process of congelation. The most religious period of the Athenian nation, I have little doubt, had long preceded the period of its greatest glory, though but for the former the latter would never have existed ; and the Goddess of Wisdom and Chastity had probably been worshipped with a simpler and more fervent devotion in the old temple which the Persians burned, than ever she was in the Parthenon. Notwithstanding, if beauty was the secret inspiration, at least it was not the recognised aim of the Athenian



mind ; Art exercised a wider sway than she claimed ; she was too high still to be her own object ; she was contented to walk “among the honourable women” that followed in the train of a mightier potentate, and to this religious aspiration she owed her most enduring triumphs.

The poets tell us that nature alone is permanent, while the works of human hand moulder into oblivion. It is not altogether so ; the Temple of Victory rises again out of its dust, and the Parthenon still opposes its broad brow to the wasting winds of time, while rivers have been dried up, and fruitful lands have become a wilderness. It was thus that I mused on the Acropolis, when my attention was caught by a faint suffusion thrown on a white and prostrate pillar near that against which I leaned :—I turned, and saw through a long range of columns the setting sun which had dropped from its vapoury veil a moment before it was to disappear. Swiftly as the progress of some mastering minstrelsy the splendour leaped from cloud to

cloud, and lit up the illumination of the west : in a few minutes more the east returned it like an echo ; the sea burned, and seemed to shake beneath the dark fire ; and the far mountain ridges, virginally robed in winter snow, became crimson first, and then seemed to grow almost transparent with the increasing light :—infinitude beyond infinitude of pacific glory opened out before me in the heavens, as cloud responded to cloud, and the sacred communion spread throughout the firmament. It was the same glorious and triumphant spectacle, a foretaste, surely, of something higher than men can as yet know or desire, which the great luminary had exhibited before the eyes of successive generations, from the time that “Earth beheld it first on the fourth day ;”—and it will be repeated without speck, flaw, or imperfection, till the day of judgment.

## CHAPTER V.

### ATHENS.

Temple of Jupiter Olympius—Practical Benefit resulting from Great National Monuments—The Ilissus—A Rural Festival near Athens.

THE morning after that of my arrival at Athens I was awakened at an early hour by a loud, unceremonious, but by no means unmusical laugh at my bedside. In Grecian air one wakes lightly and at once; I had, therefore, no difficulty in recognising our faithful guide Elias, though he tossed his head higher than ever, flung his raven locks further back over his shoulders, and was attired with a degree of splendour that threw into the shade even the glittering apparition which had greeted me first at Patras. I must not attempt a description of his attire—suffice it to say that it was in shape the ordinary Greek costume, but that it was

tricked out in the most brilliant and at the same time harmonious colours, and was as thick set with silver and gold as Persian poetry is with metaphors. He gave me time to wonder at him, and then broke forth with his usual volubility, or rather with much more ; for, sleeping like a dog whenever he had nothing to amuse him, he had laid in, during our voyage, a store of repose which probably served him for a week. “ You sleep always—*toujours*—though the sun soon up. I bring you very safe here—all safe with me—comfortable—no robbers—I walk this one hour—people wonder at my dress—people whisper—ask much questions—people much pleased.” I told him that he was in all respects admirable; and that I was going to get up. “ Yes,” said he, as he departed ; “ you get up—much haste. You see Teseo—you see many temples—all very fine at Atene—I order breakfast—Cook fear me—you eat Hymettus—honey very good—plenty—plenty ! ”

And even so it turned out ; never surely was there such honey as that of Hymettus, so pure,

so fresh, so fragrant, the essence of all flowers ; —to eat it seemed rather a poetic enjoyment than a corporeal act, especially when one remembered in how many an old song it had been celebrated. Notwithstanding, I did not prolong my meal sufficiently to devour its parent Hymettus, for I was as eager to see as Elias was to be seen. The Acropolis I had visited ; but the rest of the city remained unexplored. And yet I would rather never have seen Athens, than see it with the eyes of those travellers who literally run and read. Everything at Athens *may* indeed be seen in two days ; but it is only when we have grown intimate with its precious relics that they begin to talk to us familiarly about themselves, their histories, and their recollections. They detect at once an abstracted, an egotistic, or a restless mood, and lock their lips. Neither are they communicative to one who rushes greedily upon the feast spread before him. To observe and enjoy in travel, nothing is needed more than moral temperance. A man should never devote himself exclusively to

the new objects around him. He should read his old books and think his old thoughts, and preserve the continuity between the present and the past ; for otherwise he retains no standard by which he can measure new impressions, and they flit past him like objects in a dream. Mentally to assimilate, the old stock must bear a large proportion to the new graft, which, without a congenial support, will not grow, and in any case will only grow at its leisure. Let a man, instead of launching upon a sea without a chart when he visits a new region, throw himself back from time to time into old associations until he feels as if he were at home : he will then, when he sallies forth to see some particular object of interest, appreciate it with as fresh a satisfaction, as if, while he was musing on the matter by his own fire-side, a bird of the air had carried him aloft and placed him beside the object of his curiosity.

One of my favourite haunts while at Athens was the Temple of Jupiter Olympius, the largest fane ever raised to that divinity. Even the

Athenians, with all their energy, were not able to pile up those vast masses of marble in a less period than that of six hundred years. The temple was founded by Peisistratus, and is sufficient in itself to prove that he was not wholly unworthy of a throne. Its design is worthy of him to whom the world is indebted for the preservation of the works of Homer. How often must those around him have laughed at an undertaking which, as they doubtless believed, could never be completed ! Peisistratus knew better ; and if the "Tyrant" could have foreseen that the mighty fane was to owe its completion to another absolute sovereign, regarded no doubt by the Athenians as a usurper like himself, he might have derived an argument in favour of Monarchy from the power for good as well as for evil, which a concentration of national resources, and an unquestioned Will, impart. So proud of his achievement was the Emperor Adrian, who completed this wonder of the world, that he called by his name the portion of Athens in which it stood. Of its hundred

and twenty pillars, seventeen only remain ; and it is singular that, like many Greek temples, the rest owed their destruction to the circumstance which promised them immortality. Had they consisted of the soft tufo that abounds all over southern Italy, or of that porous and watery petrification of which the temples of Pestum were built, we should possess them still ; but they were of Pentelican marble, and the Turks wanted lime for their fortifications.

The height of these pillars is sixty feet. So far apart do they stand that you look up to the vast marble beams (if one may so call them) that run from capital to capital, expecting to see them depressed in the centre, as a beam of timber would be under the like circumstances. These pillars retain a whiteness such as a London chimney-piece would in vain emulate, and stand up bravely prepared to encounter the adversities of another thousand years, undefaced and perfect, though centuries had passed over them " before the first of Druids was a child." My favourite



time for visiting this noble brotherhood was when the full moon shone upon their shafts, and the night wind sighed through the foliage of their intricate Corinthian capitals. Beautiful as is the effect of moonlight on a Gothic ruin it is perhaps yet more satisfactory on a Grecian ; for the long and polished cornice glitters like silver in its beam, and the tall pillars fling their black shadows far away—shadows more simple, more massive, and sharply defined than those cast down from Gothic tracery. When I speak of moonlight, however, I refer to the moon of the south, which fills half the heavens with light before its disk begins to peer above the horizon.

What is to be the fate of this temple, no small part of which has already stood during nearly half the period that has elapsed since the creation of man ? Further ruin would seem impossible unless occasioned by an earthquake, or another irruption of fanatics : for were barbarians would wage war against it as vainly as against its parent Pentelicus. What if its destinies be yet

1, and if it should once more lift up

its head and wear a crown never yet accorded to it? More wonderful things have happened. Six hundred years were necessary for its completion ; why should not the labour of rebuilding it, if the cost be too heavy for the energies of a young nation, be distributed over six hundred years more ? Peisistratus knew, what was yet better known to the men who founded the cathedrals of mediæval Europe, that such labours are no unprofitable burthens, as they affect the nations that undertake them. They bind together remote generations : they are the golden cord on which high aspirations and generous efforts in successive years are strung and garlanded : they give continuity to a nation, and impersonate its history. In consecrating the present to the future they call in the future to the support of the present. Individuals and nations alike are strengthened in hours of weakness by whatever confirms their faith in that high destiny which lies before them. Their end cannot yet be come, they say, for there is yet work to be done. Michael Angelo, when asked why he had

never married, answered that he had never had time ; until his picture of the "Last Judgment" was finished, perhaps, he would not have found time to die.

When Thrasybulus led his seven hundred warriors to Athens on an enterprise that seemed all but hopeless, and recovered the city from the grasp of the "thirty tyrants," may he not have pointed the attention of the despondent to the Olympian pillars, when first in sight of his advancing band, and said, "The greatness of Athens over! why, it is but begun!" If I were King Otho, and not in debt, I would proclaim the Olympian Temple the metropolitan cathedral of Greece ; — I would lay another foundation-stone, and say, "If we raise a pillar or half a pillar each year, it is enough ; a few centuries will complete the work." The country would not be the poorer and might be greatly the richer for spending a thousand pounds per annum, if it could afford no more, on the work. ~~The~~ Temple moreover would be one day completed if it be the intention of Providence to

build up again a Greek nation. After an interval of two hundred years a use has been found for the crane so wisely left on the half-raised tower of Cologne. Great enterprises have a better chance of success than petty, for they evoke a great spirit and summon great allies to their support. They require, moreover, a sound foundation ; and that in itself is half the work. A good plan and a good intention supply the other half.

Close to the Temple of Jupiter is the Ilissus,—perhaps one should rather say, is the bed of the Ilissus ; for, in dry weather, at least, the stream is scantily fed. If there was as little water in it in old times the fair captive who descended to its reedy brink, steadying the pitcher on her head, must have had even more cause to complain than the matron who led the captive chorus in the Hecuba. Lapsing from the rocky steep of Hymettus the slender rill winds past the site where in the time of Aristotle the Lyceum sheltered his disciples in its groves. Not a vestige of the Lyceum remains ; and the temple dedicated to the Ilissian Muses has also dis-

appeared. Trickling on in a southerly direction the Ilissus tends toward the sea, but does not reach, and apparently never reached it. Like the Cephissus, which flows also toward the sea, passing at the other side of Athens, it is swallowed up before it reaches its destination, not in sandy deserts, but in thymy hollows, flowery knots, and caverns of a tempting coolness. A lover of Greek mythology—one who not only detected its mystic wisdom, the purity of its source, and the latent spirituality of its aim, but who also appreciated its deficiencies and its insufficiency,—might easily find in these two classic streams an apt emblem of that mythology, and generally of the imagination itself in its weakness and its strength. The fable or the myth, he might say, *tends* ever to the truth, but never attains it ; for its course is erratic, and it dallies with every trifle that it passes. If you mount an eminence and observe its direction you discover indeed whither it was drawn by the law of its nature, and what destination it would have reached if its source had been higher on the mountain and

if its impulse had been mightier. To profit by its index, however, you must abandon its wanderings; as well be stifled in the sands as in flowers,—in sordid cares as in sensuous illusions. There is thus a moral, it seems, not only in “running brooks,” but in brooks that can run no more; and even the northern traveller in Greece finds it difficult to avoid indulging in that moral and figurative interpretation of nature in which the Greek mind found its perpetual pastime.

In the neighbourhood of the Ilissus I was present at a festival, probably not unlike many which that stream witnessed three thousand years ago. Its office was to celebrate the beginning of Lent, or rather, perhaps, it should be regarded as the closing scene of the Carnival, which was impersonated in the form of an old man, and decapitated, amid many characteristic solemnities, at the Temple of Jupiter Olympius. Nearly all the inhabitants of Athens were present, from the oldest to the youngest, and joined in the jubilee with a sort of fierce and impas-

sioned merriment, such as left an Italian festa far behind, and suggested to me the revels which had in old time wakened the echoes of

“Old Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain.”

The king and queen rode about, with a placidity truly Teutonic, amid groups of peasantry who seldom interrupted their sports for a moment on the approach of the royal pair. They did not even take off their red caps, a want of good breeding which I was sorry to observe ; though a few of the nearest pressed the right hand against the breast, and made the profound and dignified oriental bow. The rest danced around in circles—the men with the men, and the women with the women, and exhibited in the winged movements, not only of their flexile limbs but of the whole body, a combination of native grace and wild enthusiasm, such as can be paralleled alone by the dances depicted on an Etruscan vase. Never before was I so much impressed with the lamentable loss we westerns have sustained in the substitution of our hideous, unmeaning, sordid, and doleful costume for one

on which the eye can always rest with pleasure and, where numbers are assembled, with delight. The Greeks, who are wholly indifferent to comfort—as we should probably be if we retained anything like their youthful elasticity and purity of bodily health—not only attach great importance to dress, but display a taste in the arrangement of it, and wear it with a grace which adds to the brilliant beauty of such an attire as theirs. On this occasion every one put forth his best. The upper part of the body was covered with a tight vest embroidered with gold; under that fluttered a white kilt or petticoat reaching the knee; lower down were leggings of every colour in the rainbow, and scarlet shoes. The grave lavender-coloured slopes were empurpled as the revelry swept over them; and, like the steed which glories in its rider, inanimate Nature seemed to catch the animation of her beautiful children.

In the midst of the dancers were numberless companies of peasants, seated round their rural feast. Each group had its thick and many-



coloured carpet, on which the guests placed themselves, cross-legged, in a circle, and eat, as Homer says, "until their hearts were satisfied." Homeric shouts of "inextinguishable laughter" rose up also among them from time to time; and many a trick was exhibited, and many a wild prank played, but without any admixture of vulgarity. Along the field, and about the tufted banks of the Ilissus, horsemen galloped with a fury altogether indescribable. Sometimes they advanced in a troop, and suddenly breaking, like a rocket, dispersed, and scoured the plain in every direction. Sometimes a single horseman darted forward, like an arrow shot from a bow, and passed in front of the charging column, or thridded his way among its ranks with the skill of a skater who describes a figure of eight. They sat far back on their horses, as their forefathers sat, if we can trust the witness of ancient sculpture, and as the cavalry of the East sit to this day; their scarlet caps and golden tassels (often entangled in their long hair) gleaming in the sun, and their white kilts blown across the

horse's shoulder or streaming behind. Often they flung javelins at each other, and that with such hearty good-will that the effort not seldom went near tossing them off their little white horses. Those horses had caught the madness of the hour ; and though no princess like Andromache had fed them with corn soaked in generous wine, they flashed past us with feet that hardly touched the ground, little sharp heads pointed into the air, and protruding eyes ; fleet as the wind, and so light and slender that a wind, apparently, might have blown them away.

In the midst of all this riot, a gaunt old camel paced sedately and pensively with measured steps ; now holding his level head as steadily on high as if he were pointing toward Mecca and the Prophet's tomb ; now discreetly inclining it, as one who takes gently whatever fortune comes, and browsing on the pink flowers (the silver rod) which abound on the steeps of the Ilissus. Besides this representative of the Ottoman Empire the ministers of all the European powers were present, as well as

most of the travellers at Athens; while numbers of ladies, English, German, Italian, and Greek, established themselves under the shadow of the Temple, a single pillar of which was large enough to protect a numerous group from the sun. From this tumultuous scene there were but two dissentients; the camel was one; the other was a Scotchman, almost as unworldly in his ways, and quite as simple-hearted and as indifferent to opinion, who walked about with me, and whose considerate, learned, and benignant discourse I had had many opportunities of enjoying. He regarded the tumult with an alien eye, and with a covenanting rigidity bent his gaze inflexibly before him, as we passed group after group of charging horsemen, to the no small danger of every bone in his body. More than once he stopped and placed his umbrella under his left arm, while he stuck the forefinger of an uncompromising right hand into the palm of the other, and stated to me that though decidedly, and on reflection, a liberal, he could not just quite see how a people so senseless and volatile could be safely

trusted with that management of their own affairs so essential to their well-being and to the nature of things,—a very sagacious question, which many years may leave unanswered. Pacific camels and steady Anglo-Saxons may safely be trusted with self-government, because, absorbed as they are in industrialism, they happen to want next to no government. The more fervid races of the south, when indulged in unbounded liberty, are like children cursed with an exemption from all control. The feast is no sooner finished than the indigestion begins. When the holiday is over and the music has died away, the revellers, who abandoned or destroyed their paternal dwelling, because no palace smaller than the illimitable firmament was worthy of their magnificent aspirations, are driven, for refuge, by stress of weather, into some hollow tree or slimy cavern narrower than its smallest room. Despotism is demanded as a protection where lawful government was disowned, and national glory, in place of individual freedom, is called in to stay the heart-burn of disappointed vanity.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ATHENS.

The Stoa of Adrian—The Gate of the Agora—The Monument of Philopappus—Stadium—Temple of Theseus—Temple of the Winds—The Lantern of Demosthenes—The Pnyx—The Prison of Socrates—The Religion of Socrates—The Areopagus.

AMONG the buildings of a later date at Athens, and possessed of an interest historic rather than artistic, is the Stoa of Adrian, of which there still remain nine Corinthian pillars. Close by is the gate of the Agora, built also by Adrian, and in tolerably good preservation. Attached to it is a marble tablet covered with an inscription which has turned out on examination to be a list of prices and market regulations! A record of this minute character puts us in mind of Herculaneum, and brings us more near to the Athenians, considered in connexion with their daily life, than we are brought by their

Another monument of the same

period is a building erected by Philopappus, a Syrian, to the memory of his father and grandfather, who had been kings in the East, until the Romans came and took away their place and name. It is situated on a hill opposite the Acropolis and of considerable height. Its remains are imposing in scale, and consist of white marble; but they are of Roman architecture, and their arches, which rise tier above tier, as in the Colosseum, contrast unfavourably with the adjoining models of a purer age. The walls of this building sustain an alto-relievo, the figures of which are the size of life, and remain in good preservation: but the inspiration had gone by long before the well-meaning chisel was applied to the marble; and if a Phidias had appeared at such a time, he could have probably effected but little, though seconded with all the patronage of an Adrian.

It would be interesting to ascertain whether the Athenians resented the intrusion of the Roman architecture on their sacred soil, or applauded it. The latter I should guess to

have been the fact. Nations, like individuals, are apt to grow tired of their best thoughts, especially if they have stumbled upon them early, instead of fighting their way to them by degrees, and prefer a lower class for the sake of variety. Senility, that is, age without its appropriate honours and virtues, must ever babble, and national senility delights in the petty and the trivial. The ablest men in the time of George the Second, nay of Queen Anne, laboured under the same "invincible ignorance" as the stupidest, with respect to Gothic architecture. When the Athenians had talked away all their wisdom, and had allowed valour and patriotism to be superseded by rhetoric and buffoonery, they may still have made their boast of the Parthenon ; but I suspect that the ascent to the summit of the Acropolis became irksome to them. Not many years have elapsed, since the ascent to an eminence, almost as noble, and as richly stored with venerable monuments—the rock of Cashel, had become so toilsome, that Archbishop Price, compassionating the

Sunday labours of his coach-horses, abandoned the glorious and time-honoured cathedral on its summit, which at that time needed but some repairs to its roof, and has since fallen into ruin. No diminution either of zeal or of taste could ever among the Athenians have produced an analogous act of barbarism : but it is not improbable that under the specious pretence of comprehensiveness or liberality, they were more than willing to tolerate the bad, as well as the good in Art : and it was well that the Temple of Jupiter remained unfinished, and constrained them, as by a vow, to walk in the ancient ways.

There remains one more memorial of a comparatively late period at Athens, and a very remarkable one. It is a Stadium, or long amphitheatre, constructed as a place for chariot-races and other games, and beautifully situated near the Ilissus. Its length is about eight hundred feet, and its shape is that of a long, narrow horse-shoe. Its marble seats have disappeared ; but its form is so well preserved, that



it will doubtless be again used as a place of public assembly or public amusement. For this great work the Athenians were indebted to Herodes Atticus, as well as for the theatre under the Acropolis.

Besides those ruins of which the names are preserved, you meet in most parts of Athens with immense fragments, thrown idly by in every court and garden, and half-formed street :—massive walls, prostrate columns, broken capitals, and fragments of cornices. Seldom is a house built without the discovery of such objects among its foundations. My friend Mr. F., while clearing the ground for his house, dug up no small quantity of sculpture also, the greater part of which he has inserted into his garden-wall, where it is well seen, and is safe from molestation. Some pieces of sculpture, quite equal to the expectations formed, have been disinterred in Athens. For the most part they were placed, as soon as they saw the light, in the Temple of Theseus. Shall we ever send the Elgin marbles, and will the king of

Bavaria one day restore those of Egina ? Such acts of reparation may perhaps be made, if these works of art should ever be really appreciated in the countries which have appropriated rather than adopted them ;—otherwise certainly not. So long as statues are regarded chiefly as matters of vanity, of course no nation will part with its spoils.

Of such treasures the Theseum is not an unworthy receptacle. Its Pentelican pillars (six at each end, and thirteen at the side) have escaped the injuries of time and fortune better than any other considerable building at Athens. A gentler destiny has attended what was a monument not only of Athenian glory, but of—a rarer thing by far—Athenian penitence. The Athenians had banished Theseus to the island of Scyros, where he died. No sooner had they returned from their own voluntary exile in that of Salamis, where they had taken refuge when the Persians held Athens, than they called to mind their great national hero, and made what atonement they could to

him by bringing back his bones to the city of his care, and building a temple above them. Theseus was the mythic hero of the Athenians. With him began that heroic era which supplanted the patriarchal age of their hereditary kings. To him it was that they owed their popular institutions. It was he who united into one nation the twelve independent races that inhabited the twelve plains of Attica, constituting Athens the metropolis of all, and commemorating, while he confirmed, their union by the Panathenaic festival.

The stranger at Athens is sometimes pleurably, sometimes painfully impressed by contending objects of interest, new and old. Surrounded by antiquities, he is surrounded also by all the signs of progress. But twelve houses remained in Athens at the conclusion of the war. It is now a flourishing city. You turn in one direction, and see the temple of Theseus ; in another, and your eye rests on the military hospital in which some of the patriots wounded during the war of independence have found a

home. You contemplate the memorials of Adrian, and the palace of a modern potentate claims your attention at the same moment. It is a melancholy reflection that as the new city increases the ancient monuments will become more and more eclipsed. What would the Temple of the Winds or even that of Theseus be if buried in miles of streets, alleys, and squares ? From such profanation the Acropolis alone is secure ; and even of that the summit only ; for it is hard to say to what extent that noble rock may not be injured if houses are allowed to creep up its lower slopes. There is nothing, however grand, which the hand of man is not competent to spoil : witness the deplorable injury done to the Calton hill at Edinburgh by that barbarism, the Nelson monument, the height of which dwarfs everything in the neighbourhood. The Acropolis indeed is far from being improved by the Norman tower which rises among its garland of temples ; but that solitary monument of an important historical era is, notwithstanding, deserving of respect.

And yet the sound of the chisel once more in Athens is a cheering sound. In the invigorating air of Greece everything that speaks of progress is attended with hope, for there despondency cannot exist. With little reason for the expectation I could not help fancying, while within the enchanted circle, that something great was again to arise on Athenian soil. With what feelings then must not the men of old have laboured, when the works on which they toiled were the Parthenon and the Olympian Temple, and when the world had not yet become covered with ruins? They must have thought that every stone they lodged in its bed was laid there for all time. How must not hope have led to hope, and dream to dream! A century had covered the Acropolis with temples:—why should not another century cover the lower slopes of the Lycabettus? Sunium already boasted its fane. How many a promontory of Parnes and Hymettus jutting forth into its green sea of Arbutus and Ilex must not have seemed to them to await a consecration from which the Sun-god could seldom

withhold an approving glance.. Of all builders, perhaps of all men, they must have been the happiest. They did not know how lightly Time regards his noblest works ; they had read little of history. Those who know as much of it as we do, little as that may be, will perhaps bequeath it but few materials in future. No doubt, the Athenians were presumptuous ; but not to have been so they must have been saints.

Athens is not entirely dependent on its ancient monuments for historic interest. It contains specimens of the Byzantine architecture in some churches, which, though small, struck me as very beautiful. It is unfortunate that their detestation of the Turks impelled the Athenians to pull down all the minarets, a few of which would have added much to the characteristic expression of the modern city. I wish also that some more of their palms remained : one only of all that Athens once possessed could I discover, and from whatever point of view it was seen, its slender column, scaled not fluted, and the arching crown of its branches, added grace to the objects

around. Even in the distant landscape you detect but few palms : a landscape ever varied and ever beautiful, of which you catch fair glimpses, as you look down the vistas of new streets in a city not yet overgrown. Many of these streets are, at their further end, not yet dismantled of the green sod ; and the wind which rushes up them wafts you the smell of flowers, not of smoke.

The Greek costume added infinitely, I thought, to the characteristic expression of the city, and compensated in some measure for the deficient beauty of the women. The children, with their black, flashing eyes and muse-like foreheads ; possess an extraordinary degree of loveliness ; but among the women of Athens beauty is not a frequent gift, although, where met, it is beauty of the highest and most intellectual order. On the other hand, Greek women have a naïve frankness and simplicity that is very charming. “Do you like Madame —— as much as all the world seems to do ?” I asked one of them, at a large party. “I not like

her much," was the answer; "what for her beauty to me? I not a man.' I much not like her, for she never ask me to her house." Many *misunderstandings*, at least among us, would be prevented if people spoke as frankly.

If you wish to have a complete conception of Athens you must throw in, of course, some of the usual vulgarities of, a metropolis—cafés, restaurants, a theatre, and hotels. I am sorry to say, also, that as you walk in the streets your ear is too often saluted by the sound of billiard balls or the rattling of dice. Among its drawbacks is to be included that universal nuisance, the all-seeing English traveller—the traveller of that class, I mean (for to no nation do more intelligent travellers belong also) who scribble their names on the walls of temples, write witty criticisms in the stranger's book at inns, are always paying too much, and raving about extortion, depreciate everything that is not like what they are used to, swallow an infinite quantity of dust, and return home with as much knowledge and worse morals than they took with them.



## ATHENS.

In the small circle of Athens these gentry are more in your way than in the Brightons and Cheltenhames of the Continent. One of them observed to a friend of mine: "What liars these Groecks are, and what fools, too, to fancy they can persuade us that they defeated the Persians at Marathon, when we know that it was the Turks that fought there, and d—d badly they did fight!" Another, who joined me sometimes on the Acropolis, passed his time there chiefly in prophesying concerning his dinner. To stamp impressions of the beautiful upon natures as coarse as these would be as futile an endeavour as that of writing love-letters on sand-paper. Another, of the same class, who was much troubled with hypochondria, made me look attentively in his face whenever we met, and tell him how he seemed. Once only did I observe a gleam of satisfaction on his face; it was when I pointed out to him a shop door over which was written in large letters, "English medicines sold nere." We entered the shop together, but I fear he did not buy what

he wanted, for during several days after he suffered so much from sickness of stomach as to be unable to leave his room.

It is a fortunate circumstance that among the monuments of antiquity which have escaped the spoiler's hand, at Athens, are some of a character so singular that if they had perished (and a touch might have destroyed them) nothing would have remained to give us an idea of what they had been. One of these is the "Lantern of Demosthenes ;" another is the well-known "Temple of the Winds," a small octagon tower of exquisite proportions, the alternate sides of which are graced with projecting porches supported by pillars, while aloft the eight Winds expand their wings, floating forward with refluent hair, and holding in their hands the urns of benignant dews and showery influences, by which the seasons are tempered to the use of man. This building, which contained a water-clock in communication with the fountain Clepsydra, was originally surmounted by a Triton revolving on an axis, and sustaining

in his hand a wand, the point of which drooped over the emblem of whatever wind was blowing at the time. On the side of the building still remain the lines which, like those traced on our dials, marked the hour by the shadow cast from the styles above. This building is a beautiful instance of that architectural tact which turns every practical need to account ; it would be a dangerous model, however, in the hands of a copyist, for the least alteration in its proportions would probably spoil its effect, and the slightest misapplication would make it ridiculous. One can hardly hope that it has hitherto escaped being travestied : if, indeed, it has ever been made to surmount a Greek portico, and do service as the spire of a Meeting House, there has, at least, been a moral significance in this application of the Temple of the Winds.

But of all the monuments at Athens I have little doubt that the one which most strongly stirs the spirit of an Athenian youth is that of the Pnyx, or place of public

assembly, in which the people deliberated on matters of state. Time has done no injury here, for the hand of man had done little to embellish what nature had shaped, and patriotic zeal had rendered memorable ; the Athenians took counsel in the open air ; the vault of a Grecian heaven was their roof ; the walls of their parliament house were the mountains that protected their land, and its ornaments were the temples of their gods and the trophies of their heroes, nearly all of which were visible from the spot. Among the green hills to the west of the Acropolis, and distant from it about a quarter of a mile, extends a long semicircular wall of solid rock, made regular by the chisel, the lower tier of which consists of vast blocks, apparently brought to the spot by human labour, and fitted to each other. One of these, which I measured, is nine feet square ; another is twelve feet by eight, and proportionally thick. This semicircular enclosure is the place of assembly ; in the centre of the natural wall is a range of rude steps, sur-

mounted by the Bema of the orator. It was on that pedestal that Demosthenes stood when he sent forth that voice which silenced every other in Athens, and shook the throne of Macedon.

Dr. Wordsworth, in his delightful book on Greece, attaches a high moral and political importance to the fact that the orator standing on the Pnyx was confronted by the monuments of his country. The following is one of the many eloquent passages in his work, a work not only abounding in learning, but in a poetic discernment which attests the right of the author to the illustrious name he bears:—"Not to their natural genius alone, though in that they stood pre-eminent; not to rules of Art, though ingeniously contrived and elaborately studied; not to frequency of rhetorical exercises, nor to the skill of their teachers, though they were well disciplined by both; nor yet to the sagacity of the audience, though in that they enjoyed a high privilege, was Athens indebted for the piercing eloquence of Pericles and the resistless impetuosity of Demosthenes; but also,

and especially, to these objects, which elevated their thoughts, moved their affections, and fired their imagination, as they stood upon this spot. The school of Athenian oratory was the Pnyx." Closely analogous to this reasoning is one of the arguments on which Grattan laid most stress, when resisting the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland. As one swallow does not make a summer, so one argument does not decide a large question ; but in his statement there was assuredly something more than eloquence. Very different, apparently, was the bearing of Athenian statesmen at the Pnyx and at the court of Philip, where they could no longer believe in themselves, where they contemplated their country's interests from a different point of view, and, therefore, in a different perspective, and where, with so much dust thrown in their eyes, it was hard to keep a little gold-dust out of their pockets.

Among the green knolls to the west of the Acropolis there is one object of an interest not less deep than that of the Pnyx, if

the legend which hallows it may be trusted. Many of the stony hills are excavated into caves, supposed to have been sepulchral chambers, which resemble the Indian rock-temples, and probably belong to that early period in which the Athenian race retained much of their oriental character. The original destination of these caves is a matter as uncertain as that of the catacombs of Rome and Naples, cities which have never ceased to be inhabited from the time that the excavations were made, and which yet can render as little account of them as man can give of much that lies at the foundations of his moral and social existence. One of these caves preserves the memory, if not of its original purpose, at least of its most memorable application, and is called the "prison of Socrates." It consists of three dark chambers opening into each other, the last of which communicates with the open air by means of a sort of tunnel, wrought through the rock, and issuing into light at the summit of the hill. The Philosopher, from whose capacious soul proceeded

the speculative philosophy of a Plato, and the practical philosophy of a Xenophon, as the Parthenon and the Propylea issued forth from the quarries of Pentelicus, was allowed in his dungeon a view of the Acropolis, and looked upon the Goddess of laborious Wisdom, face to face.

What would one not give to know how far he believed in her and the other Gods of his country? That he believed in much more is certain, as well as that he was cheered by far higher than Pagan hopes; or, teach what he might, he would have taken care that his philosophic "Banquet" should never be garnished with such "bitter herbs" as hemlock. It does not follow that he did not believe in those Gods. Though his dying charge to his pupil whom he commanded to sacrifice to Esculapius, when his unfriendly physicians were about to cure him of the disease of life, was obviously but allegorical in import, yet we know that he advised Xenophon to consult the oracle of Apollo, and that he told his judges he feared the



Gods more than he feared them. Socrates probably believed in one great First Cause; but he could hardly have, with certainty, inferred from that great truth, the non-existence of inferior Powers and "limitary" Intelligences. That the earlier Gods of his country represented great ideas, he knew; but one hardly sees how he could have known whether those ideas were "*αυτοχθονες*" born of the human soul alone, or whether they were the images of antitypes, existing independently of it. He would not have argued such matters like a sciolist or a man of the world, or ruled by a desire to be thought shrewder than his neighbours; neither would he have fancied he had explained difficulties when he had only explained them away. Alcibiades probably scoffed when he was well, and sent double offerings to the Gods when he was ill. Socrates must have reflected that it is hard to prove a negative, and impossible by any conjecture, to get out of the circle of mystery, unless you believe in the senses only, and thus construct a philosophy narrow indeed—a philo-

sophy for which, as well as for the philosopher, there is room enough in the tub of Diogenes—the kennel of the Cynics.

Socrates must have observed that the best men he knew were commonly devout, and that not in the way of patronising divinities, but of revering them; and he knew that his countrymen had been best and noblest when they were most religious. He must have recognized in man a being obviously intended by nature to kneel, as well as to lie down or stand; and yet, he probably had heard of no nation that worshipped but one God. On the whole, it seems not unlikely that believing, by faith, in the Moral Sense, the Genius, which, as he affirmed, walked beside him, guarding him from evil and injury, and believing, by reason, in a something higher and more divine on which, whatever is best in man finds its support, he was deterred by that docility which is of the family of Faith, and not less by that understanding which works in subordination to reason, from any positive disbelief in his country's Gods, however he may have

doubted as to their existence, and wished to cleanse and simplify their worship.

Such a conclusion would amount to no more than that on such matters Socrates was a wise sceptic, and what is rarer still, a real "Free-thinker," that is, a man who *thinks* as well as declaims, and is *free* from vanity as well as from prejudice. He appears neither to have waged war against his country's religion, nor to have identified his own moral philosophy with it. He professed it, which so virtuous a man would hardly have done, if he was not at least disposed, rather to believe, than to disbelieve it. The last thing one would conclude is, that Socrates believed religious faith to be a delusion, but at the same time, to be one which ought to be respected for the sake of its utility. Such a notion springs naturally from indifferentism, and flatters exclusive pride, without exposing its maintainer to peril ; but Socrates was a believer in Truth. That the public good may be promoted by a forbearance from the rash obtrusion of a man's scepticism is a very tenable

position on the hypothesis that the religion concerning which the sceptic doubts is notwithstanding true, or, probably true. No one, on the other hand, who has real faith in the moral sense, (the first revelation accorded to us), and who knows how intimately truth, not only in action but in thought, is associated with all the good that belongs to man's estate, can doubt that if religion were indeed but a delusion and a fraud, the larger and more permanent interests of men could never be promoted by the worship of a lie. A French philosopher has said (and there is philosophy enough in it for a *saying*) that if "a God did not exist it would be necessary to invent one." No doubt it would be—if it were possible: but it does not follow, that to create a *belief* in a God, at once heartfelt and illusory, would be possible; or that to create a belief alone would be salutary. Socrates, I have little doubt, would have considered the manufactory of divinities illicit.

There is one spot alone at Athens, which claims a deeper reverence even than the cave

which is associated with the last days of Socrates—the hill of the Areopagus. It is appropriately situated between the Pnyx, and the Acropolis; Justice thus standing with Religion at her right hand, and the place of Political deliberation at her left. The Areopagus was guarded by yet another local sanction. Not far from it was the sacred enclosure where, shadowed over by rocks, and veiled in a grove of dusky trees, stood once the awful shrine of the Eumenides, who were led thither from the Areopagus after their impeachment of Orestes. No memorial of the Venerable Goddesses remains. On the hill of the Areopagus we still trace the rocky steps, by which the judges made their midnight ascent. Their deliberations were conducted in the dark, lest their judgment should be swayed by the aspect or gestures of the person tried; a singular illustration of the degree in which the susceptible temperament of the south is influenced by visible objects. Their ears were as abstinent as their eyes; and they allowed no species of oratory to be intro-

duced into the pleadings before them. It is also an illustration of the character of Athenian laws that, among the offences tried by them, idleness, which no doubt they accounted the "root of all evil," was one. At Athens it was those only who had pre-eminently deserved well of their country, not the idle, or the improvident, who were maintained at the public charge and at the Prytaneum.

The period during which this Court held its sessions on the "Hill of Mars" was long indeed, if, as the Athenians asserted, it had continued from the time of Cecrops. It was Pericles himself who diminished its authority, and indirectly relaxed the severity of its morals; an injury greater, it is probable, than that which he did his countrymen by involving them in the Peloponnesian war, and one which justifies the well-known aphorism, that the greatest statesmen, next to those who build up their country's institutions, are commonly those who undermine them. One cannot help regretting that it was not before that Court, though in

his time it was probably much corrupted, instead of before the Bouleuterion, that Socrates was tried. A greater than he however stood up before this tribunal. Who can visit the spot and not call to mind the day when St. Paul lifted up his hand there, and pointed to the altar of the "Unknown God!" Nothing can more pointedly mark the comprehensive and piercing intelligence of the Athenians, than the fact that in their city alone such an altar stood: nothing can show how incompetent an organ of religious truth is intellect alone, than the fact that while the Gospel took root in Rome itself, the most corrupt city in the world at that time, and while Apostolic epistles were addressed to Corinth, and to the cities of Asia Minor, Athens, the keen, the versatile, and the *tolerant*, let it pass by. As I stood on that spot I remembered a discussion which I had heard years before among some young men most of whom were enthusiastic admirers of Athens. "It was not" they remarked "in art and science only that the Athenians

excelled ; they were also the most charitable of men, the most tolerant, and the most zealous in the discovery of truth. They never stoned the Prophets like the Jews, nor threw Apostles to wild beasts like the Romans. When St. Paul had propounded to them his doctrine, they were at once willing to consider it, and answered, ‘ We will hear thee again on this matter.’ ” “ Yes,” remarked a young student who was present, “ but you will find it stated a little further on, that they missed their opportunity. St. Paul left them and returned no more.” The wind “ bloweth where it listeth,” and not where man lists.



## CHAPTER VII.

### ATHENS.

A Ball at the Palace—A Greek Chief—Lord Byron in Greece—The Plain of Athens—The Cephissus—The Farm of Plato—Estate and residence of an English Settler—Progress of civilisation—Position of the Greek Church—Influence of French literature.

I DID not go to Athens for the sake of gay society ; but, notwithstanding, had an opportunity of seeing something of it the day after my arrival, the occasion being that of a ball at the palace. The king and queen, in their deportment to their guests, were what I suppose is called “very gracious ;” but as royal conversations at such times consist chiefly of questions, and these questions include no great variety, I need not trouble you with this part of the ceremonial. I have seldom witnessed a more brilliant spectacle than was presented by the motley assemblage of persons from all parts of the world collected on that occasion. Unhappily,

that wretched attire which we of the West boast, and which was introduced when the activities of modern life had trampled its dignities under foot, has, to a great degree, superseded the national costume. It has not, however, done so entirely ; and the splendid Greek dresses, thickly scattered among those more modern habiliments, invented, apparently, to shew how like monkeys men can make themselves, gave the scene the character of a pageant. The Albanian dress, you are aware, is different from the Greek ; but, in fact, each division of the mainland, and every island, has a costume of its own. The wearers of this dazzling attire were worthy of it. They had more the air of mountain chieftains, heads of clans, and feudal warriors, than of courtiers. Their gestures not only abounded in that perfect grace which the slightest consciousness destroys, but in dignity were actually imposing : their features resembled those of a statue ; but their black eyes, flashing with an uneasy light, and black hair waving fiercely on their shoulders, were in

strange contrast with the serenity of ancient sculpture.

To one of these majestic chiefs I was introduced. He must have been about six feet three inches in height ; and the only fault in the grand spectacle which he presented was that his waist had been compressed till it was disproportionably small. On our being presented to each other he shook hands with me very warmly, and I hope that my low bow was as significant as Lord Burleigh's shake of the head ; since, knowing nothing of modern Greek, I had no other means of expressing my respect for one of the greatest warriors produced by the struggle for Greek independence. He at least knew how to make action significant. Some days previously he had met in society a lady remarkable for her beauty, whom he at once singled out as the object of his devotion. He paid her no compliments, even as to her dress, as a Frenchman might have done ; neither did he talk sentiment like an Italian ; nor scowl at a rival like a Spaniard ; nor stand between her and the fire

while he entertained her with political economy, or the details of his country sports, as an Englishman occasionally does on such occasions. He drew his sword, stated to her that the weapon had cut off the heads of thirty-five Turks—and then laid it at her feet. No doubt he would have said something pretty about laying his heart there also, if he had known that he had a heart; but the Greeks are an impassioned race, simple as well as wily, and not addicted to fine sentiments.

The festal character of the scene was heightened by the amusing contrast exhibited by three solemn Turks, who, hour after hour, sat cross-legged in silent gravity, seldom moving a fold of their cumbrous robes, and indulging in no gesticulation, except that now and then they stroked down their flowing beards with a soothing hand, and rolled their heavy eyes around with staid contempt upon a spectacle which to them must have looked several degrees more like Bedlam than a college of dancing Dervises does to us. Of the ladies,

no doubt they thought about as reverently as we do of the "artistes" who exhibit their dancing powers on the stage of the opera with such vivacity and impartiality as to give the fashionable youth, who regards them with a glass from his stall, little advantage over the honest man who has paid his five shillings and taken up his humbler station in the upper gallery.

Besides several other Philhellenists who had distinguished themselves during the Greek war, one was pointed out to me, on this occasion, whom you will recollect. Mr. F., happening to hear my name, very kindly introduced himself to me, and mentioned that he had known you many years ago. Immediately after his short visit to you, he joined the Greek cause, to which he continued faithful during the whole of the war. In our discussion on that subject, he told me many interesting anecdotes of Lord Byron, with whom he was intimately acquainted. What he may think of him as a poet, I do not know; but he entertains the highest respect for the powers which Lord Byron exhibited as a

man of action and of business. His temper and his shrewdness (as he assures me) were equally admirable ; and whenever a quarrel arose between the native chiefs, the matter was referred to him as an arbitrator. He had always tact enough to allay heart-burnings, and his energy was of a nature so eminently practical, that not a few of the vapourers around him found themselves hard at work when they had only thought of a little agreeable excitement. What a pity that he was so prematurely cut off ! Who knows but that he might have displayed a high military genius, an attribute which includes so much of imagination as well as of intuition, that it must be in some measure allied with the poetic faculty. Whether, however, he had failed or succeeded, how much might not the severities of a few campaigns have done to re-invigorate his enervated system, purge away his vanity, and shake him out of the self-love which imprisoned him ! Byron has never been done justice to, and perhaps never will be. In his day he was extravagantly over-

praised ; and after he had become the “spoilt child of the public whom he had spoilt,” his errors were with as little discrimination exaggerated,—a violent access of virtuous indignation, with which the public is periodically visited, concurring with its natural inconstancy. His works were, one and all, premature ; forced in the hot-bed of a too fervid popularity. His severer critics forget how adverse his fortunes were to his true greatness. They ask, “Had he not rank, wealth, fashion, fame, beauty, &c., &c.?” No doubt he had ; but these are only the elaborate nothings that cheat a great design ; the petty entanglements that check free movement. Genius, like Virtue, wears its leathern girdle, and feeds on scanty fare ;—is flung upon faith for support, and follows the guidance of a remote hope ;—in other words, has not its portion in the present, that it may lay up store for a remoter day. Those who run in flowing attire, not succinct, and on the soft field, not the racecourse, cannot put out their full speed. Considering the eminently practical nature of

Byron's intellect, as well as the rhetorical character that pervades much of his poetry, and which so singularly combines the impassioned eloquence of Rousseau with the antithetical declamation of Pope, it is likely that if he had steadily devoted himself to public life he might even have become a parliamentary leader. His temperament, however, would not have allowed of such a devotion.

My new friend, Mr. F., finding that I was meditating an expedition to the plain of Marathon, invited me to accompany him to a country house which he possesses on an estate not far distant from the battle-field. He has made Greek antiquities an especial study, and published a pamphlet of much learning on the topography of Marathon, as well as of other parts of Attica. I had not then read his work ; but the deep acquaintance which his conversation evinced with the ancient authorities on such subjects, made me feel that I was fortunate in falling in with such a guide ; and before I had long enjoyed his acquaintance, I thought myself



fortunate on other grounds. We mounted our horses at eleven o'clock, my friend concluding his equipment by sticking a brace of pistols into his holsters. The air, besides its aromatic sweetness, possessed that bracing freshness, which makes people fancy they have wings at their shoulders. In that vivacious state of the animal spirits which it induces one feels the weight of one's own body no longer, and enjoys therefore a condition of bodily health, which in our northern climates seems the privilege of children alone, who for that reason, in a large part, retain that bold and free grace of gesture so characteristic of the Greek. The Athenians wore upon their silver ornaments the national symbol of the grasshopper, by way of asserting their claim to be an autochthon race, that is, a race which had sprung from the Attic soil, not migrated thither from another land. After I had breathed the intoxicating air which floats over the "light soil" of Attica, I could hardly help fancying that the buoyant and joyous Athenian had consulted his bodily sensations as well as his

national vanity, when he chose for the type of his race that loud-voiced insect, without a burthen, who feeds but on sunshine and dew,—the

“ Little vaulter in the sunny grass,  
Catching its heart up at the feel of June.” \*

The animal races catch the contagion ; and as we rode along that delightful spring morning my horse, a little flexible, riotous creature, seemed to snuff up oats in the air, and to gather strength from the breeze.

For five hours we pushed on through a country if possible more picturesque than beautiful. Its character on a sunny day is that of extreme variety, added to vividness of colouring : it is, however, when the sky is overcast, a thing of rare occurrence, that the mountains really look like mountains, and that a sort of soft and luxuriant grandeur becomes their character. In sunny weather the clearness of the air makes the colours so brilliant, and brings out details with such distinctness, that distance vanishes, and you fancy the remote mountain to be a hill

\* Leigh Hunt.

hard by. As we rode along under the shadow of Hymettus, a mountain 3000 feet high, it looked so small, that I could easily understand the irreverent familiarity with which the old poets treated it, celebrating it rather for its bees and its honey than for any of those mysterious charms which make the poet of the north exclaim :—

“ The tall rock,  
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,  
Haunted me like a passion.”

After leaving the skirts of Hymettus we rode on through a region of olive-woods, whose opens were sprinkled with newly made gardens, and found ourselves soon in a broken waste of slightly undulating ground extending for miles around us, and hemmed in on every side by mountains. This is the plain of Athens. It is a shallow and all but barren soil, with little vegetation except that of the wild thyme, which carpets it thickly as heath, imparting a lavender hue to the tract hard by, and a violet shade to the distance. As we advanced the

scenery grew wilder and the vegetation more luxuriant. Gradually we entered a region sprinkled with pines of a species resembling the stone-pine, as well as with oak and ilex. The ravines became deeper and more numerous; and here and there we passed through thickets of arbutus in full flower, which reminded me of Killarney, though in Greece I have seen none comparable in size with those of Mucruss and Dinis. In a few minutes more our horses were wading through a stream which hardly reached their knees. It was the famed Cephisus. Close by is the village of Cephisia, girt by a few orchards, stunted olives, and almond-trees, and a few vineyards swathing some half-obliterated ruins, and hiding not so much the remains of a place once so celebrated, as the absence of remains. Cephisus was the native place of Menander, and the spot which Herodes Atticus, in the reign of Trajan, selected for the enjoyment of his learned leisure and meditative idleness. The gardens, porticoes, and terraces, with which he adorned it,—the baths and

streams with which he refreshed it,—the arcades which cooled those streams with their shadows,—all are gone ; like the thoughts that chased each other in the brain of the philosopher, or the fancies that bubbled up in his imagination as he conversed here with his friends. Not far from this place is a spot of far deeper interest—Heraclé. 'Here Plato lived in his quiet and secluded farm. No trace now remains of the abode of the greatest of philosophers, and the man who perhaps, of all uninspired men, has exercised the largest and most beneficent influence among mankind.

The estate of my friend is certainly an enviable possession. It is situated in the heart of the mountain scenery of Attica. It lies at about an equal distance between the ranges of Pentelicus and of Parnes, the former rising to the height of 3500 feet, the latter of 4500. I specify the height of these mountains because it is a common mistake to suppose that Attica is a flat country, merely because it does not boast a Parnassus or an Erymanthus. On the

contrary, its two great plains, those of Athens and Mesogæa, are girdled by hills as high as any which Great Britain can boast. Mr. F.'s estate rises in some parts to an elevation of about 2000 feet, and is split into a labyrinth of picturesque defiles more numerous than I should have thought could exist within the space. The rugged soil is richly sprinkled with what is rare in Attica—magnificent oak-trees, at least as large as those which would have their fame in an English park. Between them stand, now singly, now in knolls, majestic broad-headed pines with trunks twisted into fantastic shapes by many a storm; billowy summits, and branches of “reverend grey-green” that bend beneath the weight of their cones. The rocks glitter with the brilliant green leaves and white blossoms of the arbutus; and the ravines are so tangled with thickets of broom, lentiscus, holly, ivy, cistus, wild-pear, juniper, tamarisk, thyme, and dwarf evergreen oak, that you are glad to follow a leader and tread where the goat has cleared a way for you.

We arrived an hour after sunset at Mr. F.'s residence, a modest but comfortable farm-house. Almost immediately adjoining it is a village built for his labourers, the country being so disturbed that the peasantry are afraid of living in scattered abodes. Close by is a pretty garden, already planted with orange-trees and flowers, as well as with the more utilitarian classes of vegetables. My friend showed his new improvements with no small pride ; and, indeed, it is impossible not to feel a deep interest in watching the progress of a country which, though rich in ancient monuments, yet remains, with reference to the conveniences of life, as completely in a wild state as New Zealand can be. A large part of the heath is already turned into corn land ; but Ceres—like some other recent potentates—can claim only to be a constitutional monarch here, and her sway is not only limited, but ill-assured. Nature in this wild region, “ though vanquished, still retires with strife,” and keeps up a not unequal battle with the industry of man. The anemones and narcissi,

when I visited the spot, forced their way unceremoniously up among the green blades of springing corn. Retrenched into one corner a little phalanx of jonquils held its ground against whole armies of barley and oats ; and irregular squadrons of crocus and wild tulips effected a second lodgment in the newly-peopled land, or lingered long in the rear with a Parthian flight, scattering their seeds behind them instead of arrows. My friend led me in triumph through files of wild pears and plums, grafted with scions of a gentler kind, brought me to the trenches lately opened for the vines, boasted of the obdurate thorns he had eradicated, and of the subject almond-trees he had admitted to the freedom of his domain,—“ the mighty we slaughtered, the lovely we spared,”—nor, indeed, could the sternest improver who had ever seen those almonds blossoming in their bowers, sometimes white as snow, sometimes rose-coloured like the same snow when flushed with sunset, condemn them to destruction for the sake of supplying their places with trim currant-bushes.



The household was in strict harmony with the estate. My friend laughed loud as he ran about performing for himself those offices which we, effeminate children of the west, require to be discharged for us by the hands of others. Even amongst us he would, however, have been an object of admiration as well as of wonder for his skill in wielding the pruning-hook. Many a modern country gentleman who does not know that Laertes, prince of Ithaca, wore goat-skin gloves to defend his hands from thorns when pruning his garden fruit trees, is yet proud of his skill in lopping his plantations. Such a person might however have stared at my friend when he laid down his pruning knife to hand a fat turkey to his cook, arranged the table himself, and then returned to his vines. Servants in Greece are not the least deficient either in courtesy or in kindness, a quality as necessary in a servant as a master ; but in early periods of society the higher classes fortunately have not contracted the bad habit of helplessness. The custom of confounding helplessness with dignity is surely

one of the signs of a very barbarous civilisation ; to use a phrase which, I believe, includes no contradiction. A Chinese mandarin cannot condescend to feed himself with his own fingers, though he does not actually think it necessary to eat by proxy. A very fine gentleman among us hardly considers himself able to walk, and would no more carry home in his hand a small volume which he had just bought in a book shop, than he would harness himself to a cab and draw it round Hyde Park. Once, I believe, it was thought a rather ignoble thing to be able to see well without a glass ; whether indeed it has not sometimes been fashionable to be a little deaf, is more than I can say. The Greeks in old time had a different notion of dignity. Proud of bodily strength as well as of beauty they were not ashamed of offices which required manual skill. Princes alternately herded oxen and delivered the law ; and royal virgins, who emblazoned in embroidery the wars of the giants and the histories of the Gods, were not above milking the cows. I confess there has always

been a great charm for me in this union of high refinement with simplicity. That surely was not an unpolished people whose sovereigns required no aid from pomp in order to retain respect; and whose villagers, shepherds, and fishermen could appreciate the poetry of Homer, as they sat in a circle around the wandering minstrel.

Our dinner over, we flung our pine cones on the fire, and, by its genial light, passed hour after hour in animated converse. The state and prospects of the country were our chief theme, and fortunate I thought myself in having met one so well qualified, both by ability and by his peculiar opportunities, to give me information. Large, indeed, and various are the interests which attach themselves to the political well-being of this little kingdom, which has so lately added, not only a new member, but a new race to the family of European nations. I must not, however, occupy your attention with a subject so complicated, and, above all, so constantly varying, as that of

Greek politics. The ecclesiastical relations of the country may one day re-act in a remarkable manner on the religious system of Europe. The Greek church is; perhaps, the only instance in Europe of a church, nominally, at least, independent alike of the Pope, of the State, and of popular interference. In that church, however, there are two parties. One of them, as is supposed, is devoted, in ecclesiastical matters, to the obedience of the Patriarch of Constantinople; and, in political matters, is not a little subject to Russian influence. This party consists, in a large measure, of the Bishops who, as the scandal goes, desire to be translated to the richer sees of the east. In the east, translations to the higher dignities are seldom, I fear, the reward of eminent sanctity. As seldom are they connected with learning, if report is to be trusted:—no one there wields the pastoral staff on account of the skill with which he has wielded the pen of the annotator; nor are bishoprics there among the rich fruits which grow from “Hebrew roots.” The paro-

chial clergy, and the majority of the laity, are said to be much attached to the principle of ecclesiastical independence. If that independence should last, and should turn out conducive to spiritual good, it must surely have an effect, by its example, on the religious relations of western Europe. The Greek may, however, discover, like the Gallican church of the last century, that "liberties" are not always the way to liberty ; that an extra-national centre is as often a support as a yoke ; and that, if Church and State sit by the same hearth, the latter will contrive to get his legs at both sides of the fire. The marriage of the clergy prevents them from exercising any formidable political influence, and they possess the confidence and affection of the people, who rightly attribute their continued existence as a people to the common bond of a uniform religious faith.

The ignorance in which the clergy have remained during ages of slavery continues to a great extent still, owing chiefly to their poverty.

They are obliged to eke out their living as they may, and it happens frequently that the priest, who is a blacksmith or ploughman as well as a clergyman, has to leave his iron on the anvil, or the ox in his stall, while he celebrates divine service in the church hard by. As a necessary result, superstitions of all sorts have insinuated themselves into the popular belief. Far from withstanding, the clergy commonly partake of these. Their knowledge of religion is too often confined to an acquaintance with its ceremonial. That ceremonial, however, is not therefore to be deemed the cause of those superstitions ; on the contrary, it may well be doubted whether for whatever knowledge of Christian Theology they retain both clergy and laity are not almost exclusively indebted to that venerable ritual which has embalmed the most important doctrines and facts of Christianity.

This ignorance is becoming, however, a more dangerous thing than it once was. The higher classes, having seen a great deal of the world, in consequence of their recent political changes,

and the number of foreigners who visit Athens, and having picked up a good deal of ill-digested knowledge, with a rapidity which is hardly consistent with that grave process, the crystallisation of knowledge into wisdom, are growing impatient of ecclesiastical authority, especially when vested in the hand of an ignorant clergy. The young men, I fear, are somewhat infected with sceptical opinions, a circumstance which may in some measure be accounted for by the attention paid to French literature. The Greeks extend their political antipathies to the language of Germany : nor, indeed, do I think it likely that, with a temperament and intellectual structure so opposed to the Teutonic, they could, even if free from prejudice, have attached themselves to the German literature. They are accustomed to clear air ; they dislike what gives them trouble ; and the whole cloud region of verse and prose they would willingly abandon to the Ixions of literature. They are jealous of the Italian language likewise, and have taken great pains, not without success, to eradicate from their

own the many words of Italian origin which had crept into it. Few Italian or Turkish words now remain; but the former tongue had, in the Ionian islands, almost superseded the native; and the Greeks being proud of their language as of their country, so recent a yoke has, of course, left a disagreeable impression behind.

The consequence of these literary antipathies is that the Greeks have been thrown upon French, a language with which nearly all of the wealthier classes in and about Athens are acquainted; and that French novels are the works which chiefly abound in the book-shops. Can one imagine a greater misfortune, especially to so young a nation? The French themselves may be in some measure acclimatised as regards the worst part of their modern literature;—indeed poison itself loses its efficacy when men have become slowly accustomed to it: and at all events they retain the glories of their ancient literature, in which they can take refuge from the pollutions and insanities of that most prominent of late. But in the case of a young nation, what a calamity



to be introduced to the boundless regions of intellect and fancy with a mountebank for a guide! How far must it not tend to remove them at once from revealed truth, and from the truth of Nature! In what a labyrinth of conventional fancies does it not threaten to ensnare them, and in what a swamp of unsound sentiment to engulf them! How little favourable must such an influence prove to a just appreciation of that literature of which the Greeks are called upon to take possession as lawful heirs! To read Sophocles just after laying down Alexander Dumas and Paul de Kock, must be like turning on a beautiful picture an eye dazzled by a conflagration, or trying the flavour of Falernian wine, sealed up "Consule Planco," with a palate exasperated by raw spirits. I have some hope, however, that the shrewd wit of the Greek may discover the cheat passed off on him, and that the truthfulness of passion and of nature which belongs to his race may revolt from the artificial and the fantastic.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MARATHON.

The neighbourhood of Athens—Site of Aphidnæ—Expedition to Marathon—The plains of Marathon—The tumulus—Influence of the battle of Marathon on Greece—Wars not unmixed evils—Assistance rendered by the God Pan to the Greeks.

THE day after our arrival at Mr. F.'s we spent in riding about the neighbouring country, sometimes in search of antiquities, sometimes, for on such occasions we soon turn epicures, in search of views yet more beautiful than those which met us everywhere. It would be difficult to describe, and not easy to forget, the ravines smothered in arbutus that we pushed our way through, the promontories, shaggy with spreading ilex, that we wound around, and the glorious and jubilant views that we contemplated, now of the sea-like plain of Athens, now of the broad and azure sea. I speak of the plain of Athens as if it were flat, for such it appears when looked

down on from the heights which we ascended, but it has in reality nothing in common with the Campagna of Rome, which—admirably in character with its position—is as level as the outer court of a palace. The plain of Athens is nearly everywhere undulating in surface, is pierced with little narrow glens, and hollowed into wide green basins, decked with the softest vegetation and secluded like so many nests. The rivers that wind among the Athenian hills have a peculiar character of their own. They are but streams, except when swollen by sudden floods, and at this season there was seldom much difficulty in wading across them ; their windings, however, are as tortuous as the folds of a serpent and irresistibly attract the traveller to follow them through their dim ravines shadowed with juniper and ilex. From their sands, pure as pearl, rise luxuriant bowers of oleander, frequently about the size that hazel thickets attain among us. Depressed by their own weight, these empurpled copses lean across the stream which glides beneath

their massive flowerage in amethyst instead of emerald.

The spot most remarkable for its historical associations which we visited this day was the site of the ancient Aphidnæ, the birthplace of Tyrteus, the lame minstrel, to whom Sparta owed its freedom, as well as of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the deliverers of Athens. Aphidnæ however has earlier records than these. It was the city in which Theseus concealed Helen, then not more than nine years old, whom he had carried off, and whom her brothers, Castor and Pollux, pursued and recovered. It is magnificently situated at the summit of a hill crowned with an oval platform of almost architectural regularity. Nothing more precious than a few fragments of ancient pottery has yet been found in its neighbourhood; but as no search but the most trivial has been made, we may still expect interesting discoveries from a spot which always remained among the most important of Athenian fortresses.

The morning after our visit to Aphidnæ we

mounted our horses again at about ten o'clock, and started for Marathon. The weather was beautiful, and the scenery, as we approached the plain, became gradually grander. The mountains opened out into simpler forms ; the ravines widened into valleys ; and beyond them swelled the sea, sometimes in wide expanse, but more often so cut by rocks, promontories, and the slopes of the nearer hills, as to look like a chain of lakes. After a ride of about three hours we reached the plain of Marathon, a worthy theatre for perhaps the most important battle which the world ever saw. The field is about six miles long and two broad : in shape it is tolerably regular, and is as flat as the sea that leans against it and, as Landor says,

“ Level with the green herbage seems still higher.”

On two sides it is hemmed in by the mountains of Attica, and on one by the loftier ranges of Eubœa, which, as we approached them, peered above their clouds, glittering with snow. Just far enough from the shore to be tinged with

blue, lies the island of Cea, the native place of Simonides, the tenderest, if tradition may be trusted, of all the Greek poets. How often must his songs, as well as the slenderer note of lark and thrush, have been heard on that plain which the Persian trumpet once shook ! Their minstrelsy still remains ; but we ask in vain for

● “ One precious tender-hearted strain of pure Simonides.”

I thought of him when my eye first fell on the island, and again when, riding into the field which once echoed with onset of the Median cavalry, we heard all around no music more warlike than the bleating of the lambs and the cooing of the wild pigeons—perhaps the best accompaniment to songs like his.

Within about half a mile of the shore stands the tumulus raised by Aristides over the Athenians who fell in the action. It was from the top of this mound that we contemplated a spectacle the great associations of which were so strikingly contrasted with the scene beheld by the outward eye, characterised as that was

by a mingled expression of soft enjoyment and profound repose—such repose as follows a storm. The soil is here and there beginning, after its long sabbath, to minister again to human wants. A few patches, which the plough had opened, had begun to sprout with fresh blades of corn ; but these exceptions did not jar upon the solemnity of the scene. A light breeze was gliding over the illuminated plain, and gently rippling the sea which flashed merrily beyond it with a blue light. It was just sufficient to refresh us after our ride, and to wave the anemones, crocuses, and jonquils, at the base of the mound, which was covered to the summit with the yellow asphodel, and a flower called *sphendone*, whose tall pink spikes stood erect in defiance of the breeze, and in whose flowers the bees murmured securely. As I stood on the triumphant funeral mound, and, looking round, contrasted that peaceful plain with the spectacle it must once have presented, a great black shadow passed rapidly along the ground, and my companion called on me to

look up. I raised my eyes in time to see an eagle aslant against the sky, and drifting away upon expanded wings to his mountain home. It was now time to return. I took the first good gallop I had had since I left home, on the plain of Marathon, and turned at last to leave it, at a more sober pace. Again we crossed the shallow rivers, startling the thrushes and blackbirds out of the brakes that bend across them (the nightingales had not yet made themselves audible), and stopping now and then to watch the progress of the violet shades as they stole down the distant glens, and the auburn lights more near, with which the rounded and heath-covered eminences seemed to burn.

We reached home about sunset, eat our dinner with a good appetite, thought we had earned it almost as well as if we had fought in the great battle of Marathon, instead of having only made a pilgrimage to the plain. and passed the evening discussing the effects of that battle, and all the affairs of the Eastern world,—Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Turkey, Greece.



How marvellously each of those countries was led on from small beginnings to great destinies ; and how marvellously from each was its " candlestick removed," when it had done its part, and shown itself incapable of doing more ! None of these countries perished without leaving to the world a great inheritance :—it is on their bequests that we live, and out of their ruins that our social structures have been built. The old Latin adage, that a serpent is powerless till he has eaten a serpent, might be applied to nations. Every nation which has vindicated to itself any true greatness has absorbed, either politically, or morally and intellectually, some nation that had preceded it. The Greek intellect absorbed and assimilated all that was most valuable in the political and philosophic lore of nations further to the east, except Palestine. Rome in turn absorbed Greece ; and Roman law with Teutonic manners (both fused together by the vital heat of Christianity), built up the civilisation of Mediæval Europe. The European common-

wealth thus inherited all that antiquity and the East had done and thought :—America inherits us. It was Bishop Berkeley who recorded in verse the fact that civilisation has ever rolled on in one great wave from the East to the West. Did he prophesy truly when he said “Time’s noblest conquest is his last?” Time only can answer. In the meanwhile how nearly has the wave of civilisation gone round the world! When it has reached its western limit what will remain for it but that, rolling still forward, it should burst again on the shores of the eastern world. It is in vain I suspect that we send our missionaries and our books *backward* to the east. A retrograde course is not allowed us. On the other hand what new morning is not destined to burst over the world, when, the first great revolution completed, the second commences, and from populous cities and flourishing states on the shores of the Pacific, the great and developed European Mind breaks in sudden dawn upon the land of Confucius? That time cannot now be far distant—before

the year 2000 it must, judging from the rate of progress at present observable, be at hand. The millenarians might find in this circumstance a philosophical confirmation of their reveries with respect to the new era which is to set in all over the world when the 6000 years since Adam are completed, and the Sabbatical thousand has commenced.

Strange and stirring is the reflection that all which Greece has done for the world,—in other words, all that the world now is, would never have existed if the battle of Marathon had been lost ;—perhaps we might add, if it had never been fought. It was Persia that created a historic and developed Greece, and changed into vigorous nations the secluded tribes previously contented, for the most part, with a narrow and inglorious life within their several cantons. The Persian invasion combined them, made them feel their power, made them know their name, encompassed with the golden ring of Hellenic unity their various and often contending races. The Persian invasion at the

same time stimulated them to a general emulation ; for it acquainted each with its strength, and introduced it into a region of glory, in which all strove as athletes in the Olympic games. The Persian invasion developed their intellect in awakening their moral energies. Never has the world witnessed a phenomenon so wonderful as the rapid expansion of the Athenian mind after the Persian war. The ten centuries which had elapsed from the days of Cecrops to those of Themistocles had left behind them little except legend and fable. In one century after that period the pent-up energies had fully flowered, and the widest development of intellect that the world has ever known had taken place. Athens had produced the statesmanship of Themistocles and Pericles ;—the three great tragedians, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, had celebrated the mythic legends of Greece : Socrates had taught his countrymen, and Aristophanes had amused them : Plato and Aristotle had built up those two opposed philosophies, the essence perhaps of all that

the world has since done in metaphysics : Herodotus and Thucydides had written their histories ; Phidias had sculptured his Jupiter, Pallas, and that Panathenaic procession which has ever remained the perfect model of Grecian art : Demosthenes had heard the heroic tale, and caught the fire. To these names how many more might not be added ? The materials no doubt must have existed before, and centuries may have been needed to collect and to arrange them : but it was the Persian war which dropt upon the frankincense the one spark necessary to kindle the pyre and to light the sacrifice.

The progress of nations resembles that of individual men. In the history of individuals the severest trials notoriously supply the noblest opportunities ; and the progress of years is often made in the brief effort necessary to withstand some extraordinary temptation, or subdue some external difficulty. Such are the compensations accorded in the moral world. Not less remarkable are those which belong

to the political. That roused energy with which a nation preserves its independence from foreign aggression, or redeems it when lost, carries it far across the frontier which it defends. Once taught the might that is latent in the human heart, it trusts itself, and that might is doubled. Every citizen, knowing that the eyes of all are upon him, labours as though the energies of all were compassed in his single breast—a whole nation becomes charged with that spirit which vivifies human hearts as a thunder storm is said to vivify the germs of vegetable life; and, moving as one man, multiplies its power a thousand fold by union. When the sword has done its work, enterprise and enthusiasm still demand their objects, and the intellect leaps from its sheath.

Marathon was not a glorious field alone: it was more useful than ever yet was factory, railway, or the richest land that Holland has snatched from the sea. There are many persons who rejoice in the prospect of a time when wars will be rendered impossible by the close com-

mercial relations which, as they anticipate, must one day bind nation with nation. I cannot say that this seems to me a very profound philosophy. Wars spring from the bad passions of men; and if they could be prevented by a gradual subjugation of such disturbing forces, no doubt there would then be much cause to rejoice in so auspicious a change. It does not follow, however, that nations would be the better if wars were suppressed by a merely external hindrance, such as the inconvenience of interference with trade. In the first place, a prolonged peace, thus artificially maintained, would probably produce internal discontents by denying the passions their natural outlet, and would thus promote that worst species of war, the civil war of class against class. In the second place, it would probably prevent a nation from recognising its great men,\* or even perceiving its need of greatness, whether hereditary, elective, or self-asserted. It is through its fears that a people feels love and reverence; and it is through external dangers ~~that~~ it is reminded

that it has external relations. Without marked and definite external relations a Nation does not properly exist as such. It may exist as a populace, and then it is like a herd of wolves ; or as a people, and then it is an ox grazing in deep meads, and pacific, except when molested by the gad-fly ; but it must have practical external bearings before it is elevated into that beautiful and brave war-horse, a Nation, and taught to glory in bridle and spur, and to " clothe its neck in thunder." It is only when it has graduated as a nation that a race completes its being, consummates its work, brings forth its perfect fruits of action, passion, thought, its arts and its sciences, as well as that great and scientific heroic poem, the hierarchy of an orderly society, ever changing, yet ever preserving its continuity.

As little philosophical does it seem to me, whether we regard the history of Greece or of any other country, to associate war merely with images of barbarism, violence, or folly. There is more of the pedagogue than of the thinker in



this compendious view of the matter. It is not borne out by fact. Dr. Johnson may affirm Alexander or Cæsar to have been no better than a robber on a large scale ; but he could hardly deny that these remarkable specimens of the robber kind were often influenced by exalted motives, and inspired by the noblest intellects accorded to man (if we except the first class of contemplative minds) ; that heroism went beside them in their march, and that civilisation, religion, the triumphs of humanity, and the great designs of Providence, followed in their train. Had Britain repulsed Cæsar, the effort might perhaps have made it a nation : its failure affords us some grounds for concluding that it was better for her to become part of a great empire, which governed its dependencies wisely, than to preserve its savage independence. The failure of Xerxes, on the other hand, abundantly proves that he had no true vocation to be a conqueror of Hellas. The attempt was not, therefore, without consequences. His 400,000 soldiers turned out to be but an embassy sent

to inform the Greeks that it was time for them to be up and doing ; that “arts, though unimagined, yet to be,” demanded their birth ; and that, ere long, there would be need of the philosopher who trained up Alexander. Even aggressive wars are not mere evils, reprehensible as they undoubtedly are, and with whatever sufferings they may be attended. For every such war there is a war of defence also ; and such a war calls out and exercises all the nobler parts of our nature, patriotism, courage, the enthusiasm that takes a man out of himself and breaks through the chains of conventional littleness, the ardour that unites him to a great cause, the strong human feeling that makes him value blessings which he has discovered to be precarious, and all those manlier virtues which must perish if they be not employed, and in the absence of which man becomes a soft, effeminate, mechanical being, equally incapable of elevated thought and of genuine action. In fine, without denying that wars are evils, it is no paradox to maintain that we should be

worse without them, unless we could rise above them : and that for a moral disease, none but a moral could be the genuine cure. They are a part of man's chequered lot here below ; and the vicissitudes to which they expose man are better than the dust and ashes of a Chinese civilisation. Human wars, no more than human loves, proceed merely from impulses common to man and the inferior races ; they have their nobler as well as their inferior part :—for just indignation and vengeance, as well as mercy and love, have their antitypes above ; and even in the unjust there is commonly a mixture of erring aspiration and right principle misapplied.

The fact that defensive wars are religious wars and assisted by religious sanctions, is in no instance more remarkably illustrated than in the glorious defence of Greece against Persia. Among the instances of supernatural aid by which the righteous cause was supposed to have been vindicated, perhaps the most remarkable was the interference of the god Pan, who had promised to leave his Arcadian retreats, and to

help the Athenians at Marathon. It was in commemoration of such aid that the Athenians dedicated to that pastoral, and not less mystical, divinity, the cave in the rocky foundations of the Acropolis which still bears his name. As I gazed on that cave, I could not but call to mind that the support which the Athenians believed they had received was no other than that to which Wordsworth appealed on behalf of the Tyrolese. The circumstance is a singular instance of that analogy of thought which is to be found in all places and at all times, when great minds are moved by great events. The deepest poet of modern times uttering, in his "Sonnets dedicated to Liberty," his solemn and authoritative protest against the aggressive tyranny of Buonaparte, and exhorting each nation of Europe, in turn, to withstand that aggression to the death, admonishes them likewise that

"The power of armies is a visible thing,  
Formal and circumscribed in time and place."

And bids them place their trust in that *universal* principle of Strength, Justice and Immor-

tality, of which the soul of man is the special abode, and of which Pan was a Pagan type.

“ O'er the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,

Dwells in the affections and the soul of man

A Godhead, like the universal Pan,

But more exalted, with a brighter train.

And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,

Showered equally on city and on field,

And neither hope nor stedfast promise yield

In these usurping times of fear and pain !

Such doom awaits us—nay, forbid it, Heaven !

\* We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws

To which the triumph of all good is given,

High sacrifice, and labour without pause,

Even to the death :—else wherefore should the eye

Of man converse with immortality !

The day after our visit to Marathon we rode back to Athens by a road more rugged than any we had yet traversed. Bending towards the north it wound along the precipices under Mount Parnes, passing through every variety of glen and gorge. The day was overcast and eminently favourable for Athenian mountains, giving them an elevation not usually theirs. Nothing could be more charming than the glimpses we caught of peak beyond peak, and the long perspective of valleys opening out between the cloudy promontories of Pentelicus

and Hymettus. Never have I seen such a multitude of rainbows as in the Greek mountains. On this occasion the arch was seldom perfect. The prismatic colours commonly diffused themselves on the skirt of some driving cloud ; or, tinging the mist just as it rushed in unending stream past its rocky barrier, advanced with it, as though the mouth of the valley was breathing fire. As we scaled the mountain side above the region of oak and pine, the steeps were covered with a luxuriant wood of arbutus in full flower, which sloped away for miles below us, and rose above us till the clouds hid them from our sight. On the higher parts of our mountain path their leaves were moulded with snow, and looked like the sculptured wreaths of the Parthenon. The moss which covered the projecting ridges of the rock were fringed, to the borders of the snow, with bright clusters of crocus and jonquil, yellow and blue, and little icicles hung in the caverned shadow of the crags, and let fall their diamond drops in the sun. On a circular hill, detached, but yet

part of the range of Parnes, we came to some ruined walls. Every ruin, however minute, in Attica is a monument ; accordingly I asked my friend what he could tell me of that which lay before us. It was no other than Decelea, one of the chief Athenian fortresses, which the Spartans took possession of in the year B.C. 413, and in quiet possession of which they were allowed to remain for ten years, laying waste at will the country all around, until Athens itself became their prey. The position was so strong that it would not have been easy to dislodge them : on the other hand, it seems almost incredible, that the Athenians should year after year have pursued their usual avocations with an enemy established in the centre of their country, and not more than twelve miles from the capital. No doubt to that volatile race the circumstance, when no longer a novelty, ceased to be interesting. From that eminence the Spartans must almost have been able to watch the Panathenæic procession winding up the steep of the Acropolis, or the “ Men

of Athens" flocking day by day to the temple of Bacchus. How often must a scornful smile have passed over the rigid features of a Spartan, awake to duty and asleep to art, as he witnessed a spectacle that involved, in as whimsical a form, a deeper moral than ever Aristophanes submitted to an audience of his countrymen. The men who flocked contentedly to the theatre with an enemy encamped within sight, were the sons and grandsons of those who had fought at Marathon! Above them rose the Parthenon and the statue of Pallas:—but, man is not always worthy of the works of his own hands.

Descending into the plain of Athens, we advanced rapidly toward our goal, and ere long the six temples of the metropolis began to define their outlines more clearly. Behind them, under a sky disordered with fleeting snow-racks, the sea stretched far away like a plate of silver. Round the sun a watery circle, like that which one often sees around the moon, extended, melting wanly away into a faint radiance. In a few minutes more we



were in the valley of the Cephissus. Ere long we had reached Colonos, and stood on the spot upon which Sophocles makes the blind Theban King take his stand. I tarried there for a little time and called to mind that chorus (it has few rivals even in Sophocles), in which the grove sacred to the Eumenides is described. The modern poet asks—

Colonos ! can it be that thou hast still  
Thy cypress, and thine olive, and thy vine ? \*

A few olive trees are still in the neighbourhood ; but if all remained that the great tragedian describes, the mystic glory imparted to it by his imagination would equally be wanting. Again we rode on, and before long had passed the temple of Theseus, and reached the banks of the Ilissus, and the vast columns of the temple of Jupiter. And so ends my visit to Marathon. As a memorial of it I have carried off a stout walking stick of cedar cut upon the plain. Its ancestor, let us believe, gave a sound beating to a Persian.

\* "School of the Heart, and Other Poems," by the Rev. H. Alford.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ELEUSIS.

Degree in which the physical characteristics of Attica moulded the Athenian character—Its shallow soil, its light air, its quarries, its mines—Its freedom from rapacious aggression, its dependence on maritime enterprise—The road to Eleusis—Athenian landscape—Ancient processions to Eleusis—Its position—Ancient remains—Character of the Eleusinian Mysteries—Ceremonies attached to them—Relation of the Eleusinian teaching to Christian doctrines—Paganism a witness to Christianity—Eleusinian Priesthood.

MY sojourn at Athens was agreeably diversified by expeditions made in all directions within the neighbourhood, as well as by some more distant, each of which assisted me in understanding what lay before me. The more one sees of Attica, the more one perceives how admirably it was adapted to mould and foster the Athenian character. Its picturesque variety gave a genial impulse to the fancy, which in mountain scenery on a more imposing scale might have been overawed, and which the sublime expanse of Asiatic plains would probably

have overborne with the monotony of mystical reverie. Its shallow soil, while it exempted the Athenians from invasion prompted by cupidity, and thus gave their institutions time to develop themselves by a spontaneous and gradual process, bound them over also to industry, and severely tasked their ingenuity. It compelled them likewise to look on the sea and its islands as a part of their domain, and thus engendered not only the enterprise, but the spirit of liberty which are among the benefits of commerce and of colonisation. An agricultural population tends most to revere the prescriptive in institutions, a maritime to tempt the untried: the one attaches itself chiefly to the aristocratic and the hereditary, the other to the popular and the elective principle. It is the marriage of both principles which gives birth to order and to freedom, and therefore which most favours that expansion of moral energies, of which imaginative and intellectual triumphs are the flower and the fruit.

A great importance is likewise to be attached, I suspect, to the animating influence of that light and dry air which floats over a rocky soil. Milton, celebrating Athens, in that consummate passage of his "Paradise Regained," in which the kingdoms of the past world pass before his inspired eye, (as the kingdoms of a future world, seen from the "Specular Mount," pass, at the end of "Paradise Lost," before that of the angelic intelligence and the first Man), particularly remarks that its soil was light and its air pure. The fat rich plains of the adjoining Bœotia rewarded the husbandman with an ampler prize ; and as "prayer and provender" are said not to hinder each other, it is noticeable that the sacerdotal caste as well as the aristocratic, found there its stronghold. Thebes, however, if it exiled no great men, produced but few. The difference between Bœotia and Attica in soil and climate, was much like that between Lombardy and Tuscany ; and a corresponding dissimilarity is observable in their fortunes.

The same niggard soil which stunted the

Athenian olives disclosed those silver mines in the neighbourhood of Sunium, the produce of which, raised by the labour of slaves, (not citizens), enabled the Athenians to build and man that fleet which conquered Xerxes. Attica contained also in lavish abundance those marble quarries to which the sculptor and the architect were indebted for their materials. An inexhaustible supply of native materials is one of the first requisites for Art, which, without it, will be in danger of remaining ever but an exotic and a luxury. Germany, Belgium, France, England, in the middle ages, raised their cathedrals, for the most part, of the stone near at hand, and carved the wood that grew in their native forests. If we would again produce anything great we must learn to make the best of those materials within our own shores which at least do not double the cost of workmanship, and let Carrara rest in peace. At Athens the best and the cheapest materials were found together.

One of my most interesting expeditions was

made to the site of the ancient Eleusis, famous in old time for its mysteries. In many places remains are still traced of the road thither, which traversed the most beautiful region in the neighbourhood of Athens, issuing beyond the city walls into that district which contained the monuments of her greatest men, winding by the Platonic academy, and crossing the Cephissus. The scenery through which it passes is eminently noble and characteristic. The intensity of light in the south is perhaps that which chiefly causes the marked difference between the northern and the southern landscape, enlarging, as it does indefinitely, the sphere of vision in the latter. The amphitheatric breadth of Grecian scenery is increased by the circumstance that the woods commonly consist of olives or some other tree small in growth and undefined in colour, and, therefore, permit the eye to comprehend without interruption the extent of the open plain, and to wander, undiverted, to its mountain boundary sharply traced against a purple sky. Not only

are there few clouds, but there are seldom those vapours which give a semi-visionary character to our English landscape ; you miss the bloom of that landscape, you miss its countless associations, its social allusions impressed by spire, manor-house, and cottage, the fair order of fields, the domesticity of guarded nooks ; but you enjoy in the place of these an amplitude and majesty of which we know nothing. These are especially the characteristics of Attica, which consists, not of valleys, but of twelve wide plains or basins, each encompassed by its mountain walls, and most of them washed by the sea.

I often left the carriage on my way to Eleusis to mount an eminence and study the character of Athenian scenery. All around me lay a scene grave at once and lovely, and glistening in the sunshine with a brilliancy that made me rejoice that the predominant growth was not of a kind to reflect the sunbeams more fiercely than the lavender-coloured thyme. Gazing upon a scene expanded around you like a map, your eye is caught here and there by

a sparkling village, shining through, not screened by, its vineyards, cypresses, and perhaps a few palms ; but the stony mountain ridges on the horizon no more recall to you the piny and jagged Alps, than the foreground reminds you of an English pasture, so truly "the fat of the land," as to be only a degree less animal than the herds that roam over it. Neither does the scene present anything like the exuberant richness of a Neapolitan landscape, with its gleaming orange-gardens, hedges rough with aloë and cactus, thickets of matted shrubs, and odorous trees trailed over with convolvulus and cistus. In the Athenian landscape, form is all in all : clearness, vastness, and simplicity are its main characteristics. There is infinite beauty in it, but comparatively little sentiment about it. The cloudiest day looks angry, not melancholy, and the sunshine pierces the storm.

It is as you approach Eleusis that you observe traces of that ancient road by which, year after year, the statue of Bacchus was carried from the Eleusinian temple to Athens and back.



again, with myrtle crown and uplifted torch. In some places, and especially where the road skirts the sea, the stone pavement still remains, and, stamped in it, are the wheelmarks of the car that rolled over it 3000 years ago, and many a century earlier. On the cliffs close by, marks of the chisel are still to be seen, as well as little hollows carved in the rock, the cells in which votive offerings were once suspended. Along that road passed all the most illustrious of the Hellenic race, and many of the chief men (warriors, philosophers, consuls, priests, emperors) of Asia, of Africa, and of Rome. The shores of the Mediterranean, that Olympic stadium of the ancient world, sent thither, from Syria to Calpe, as offerings, not gold and frankincense, but the rulers to whom they had confided their destinies, and the seers by whom their intelligence was directed, zealous each and all of them to be initiated into the mysteries that gave promise of a future life. There paced Eschylus zealous and absorbed, and Horace ready to make the best of all chances, provided among

their number was neither lance nor sword. Eschylus was arraigned before the Arcopagus on a charge of having partially revealed in one of his tragedies the secrets confided to him in the mysteries. What defence he made, we know not ; but he might have replied that he was a poet, and that that is no poetry through which there sparkle out, even in the bard's despite, no flashes of Eleusinian lore. He might have added, that the mischief is the less formidable, inasmuch as the people are likely to be very little the wiser for any such revelations.

The road increases in beauty as it advances to the west. Leaving behind it the plain of Athens, it gradually ascends to a considerable height among the Eleusinian mountains, winding among broad and picturesque but sterile glens. At the summit of the pass you reach the remains of an ancient viaduct, as well as those of a large and interesting monastery of Byzantine architecture. This spot commands a glorious view of the sea close to Eleusis, the

purple expanse being completely shut in and framed by mountains. A long but gradual descent brings you to the shore, beside which the road extends in a single curve, passing through the plain of Eleusis, which is not less picturesque than that of Athens.

The ancient city of Eleusis stood on a gently swelling hill, glorious with the many monuments which adorned what may be accounted the "Holy City" of Greece—a city which stood to it in somewhat of the same relation that ecclesiastical Rome stood to medieval Europe. At the eastern extremity of its rocky platform rose the far-famed temple of Ceres, the largest in Greece, as well as the most venerable. It presented to the south a portico of twelve columns, and four rows of pillars divided the cella. Like the Parthenon, it, too, had its colonnaded Propylea, which stood in advance of its outer court. That temple exists no more. How or when it disappeared, history keeps no record. Everywhere in Greece one is astonished  
          dicted by the total disappearance of

monuments, so built that they might have lasted as long as the world lasts. What can have occasioned so lamentable a disaster? Eleusis, I believe, was never fortified in modern times: there, then, the Turks required no lime for the construction of bastions. In many cases the obliteration has been as complete as if it had been effected by magic or some retributive miracle. Our loss, however, in this case, as in most others, is not unmitigated loss. The Grecian monuments, like the Sibyl's books, have become far more precious, because so large a proportion of them have been destroyed.

Eleusis has at least left significant memorials behind it. In almost every part of the modern village I came upon the remains of ancient walls, consisting of those prodigious blocks which the Greeks used in their buildings. On the platform of the hill which rises above that village, and commands the noblest view of the bay and the mountains around it, are the ruins of the temple itself. Not a pillar now stands; but the ground is strewn with fragments of their

shafts, as well as with capitals and blocks of the frieze. There can be little doubt that large discoveries of sculpture will be found in the neighbourhood of Eleusis, whenever any sufficient search is made. Already, indeed, they have filled a ruined church hard by with fragments of statues casually discovered in the neighbourhood. The want of funds is, no doubt, the great obstacle in the way of an effectual search. The reverence attached to such remains by the common people has, in some instances, been known to partake of, a superstitious character. On one occasion they steadily resisted the removal of a statue of Ceres, affirming that its loss might imperil their harvests in future years.

We can of course discover little in detail of the Eleusinian mysteries, though we know that the splendid ceremonial in the temple, exhibited before the eyes of the initiated, was intended to impart in a symbolic form the deepest lessons to which ancient theology had attained, to illustrate a mystic philosophy of man, of life, and

of a life after death, and to dedicate the votary to a discipline of purity and virtue, as a pledge of his participation in that immortal life reserved for well-doers. It was deemed necessary for all persons to partake of this mystic initiation in order to insure their happiness in another world ; and one of the charges brought against Socrates was, that with this duty he had never complied. The characters of those who presented themselves were severely scrutinised ; and those charged with various crimes (among others, with homicide, though accidental) were excluded. The first day of the celebration was called by the name of *Assembly*, for on it first the worshippers were congregated together. The second day was called by a name signifying *Purification*, the votaries being obliged to bathe in the sea. The third day was devoted to *Sacrifice*, the priests themselves not being permitted on this occasion to partake of the sacrificial feast. The fourth day a solemn procession took place, in which the *Holy Basket* of Ceres was carried aloft. The fifth was called

the *Torch-day* ; and on the night that followed it, people rushed over the hills with lighted torches, in memory of the search of Ceres after her daughter, and of the torch which she lighted at the flames of *Ætna*. The sixth day was called *Iacchus*, being especially consecrated to the mystic Bacchus, (the son of Jupiter and Ceres, not the Theban divinity,) who had accompanied his mother in her wanderings, bearing a torch in his hand, and whose statue was on that day carried in procession to Athens.

On the seventh day of the ceremonial, the votaries participated in solemn games, and the reward of the victor was a measure of barley, that grain having been sown first at Eleusis. The eighth day was called by the name of *Æsculapius*, the god of healing, who, as well as Hercules, had participated in the lesser mysteries. The ninth and last day was in its import the most deeply significant of all. It was known by the name of "*Earthen Vessels*," because on that day two such vessels were filled with wine, and placed, one to the east and the

other to the west, in the temple. Mystical words were murmured over those vessels, after which they were both thrown down, and the wine spilt on the ground was offered as a libation.

The Eleusinian mysteries being intended especially as pledges of immortality were not unnaturally connected with the worship of the venerable and beneficent daughter of Saturn and Vesta. Her attribute, the blade of corn (the illustration used by St. Paul), was expressly held forth to the votary as a symbol, in its burial, its decay, and its regermination, of immortality. Still more strongly was the second life shadowed forth in the tale of Proserpine, daughter of Ceres, who, though snatched to the kingdom of Shades, was yet, through Jove's permission, restored annually to her mother, and allowed to breathe, during half the year, the upper air. In such close connection with Proserpine was Ceres contemplated in these mysteries, that the only name she bore in them was that of *Αχθεια*, or *the Mourner*. I know



not whether in any other part of Greek religion there was so close a recognition of the divinity of Sorrow. In every part of these mysteries with which we are acquainted we find marvelous traces of that Sibylline insight possessed by the ancient world, which the early doctors of the Church regarded as an inferior sort of inspiration, accorded in order to prepare the pagan mind for the truth. The most remarkable of the allegories which belonged to the Eleusinian worship was assuredly that of the broken earthen vessels and the wine poured out in oblation, especially if we call to mind Bacon's exposition of the earthen vessel in which Hercules was said to have crossed the sea,—an allusion (as our great inductive philosopher asserts) to that frail mansion of the flesh, the "body prepared" for One who in the more terrestrial aspect of his sacred deeds and sufferings was prefigured by the divine hero, warrior, and deliverer of antiquity.

There were countless significant allusions in these mysteries, or rather in that slight portion

of them with which we are acquainted, which might indeed challenge a deep attention. The sacred mysteries were recited to the initiated after their purification, from a book called *Πετρωμα*, because it was made of two stones fitly joined together. After this instruction certain enquiries were catechetically made of every man, to which he returned answers. The chief Hierophant called out with a loud voice, commanding the profane to depart, the whole company standing at this time in the vestibule of the temple. The glorious spectacle in the interior of the temple, which was flooded with light, and in which the Eleusinian philosophy of heaven and earth was exhibited in vision before the eyes of men whose brows the priests had bound with myrtle, in allusion to the bowers of the Blessed, was called by the name of *Αυτοψια*, or *Intuition*. During the celebration of the mysteries it was forbidden to arrest a debtor or to present any petition. In order to abolish on this occasion all distinction between the rich and the poor, *Lycurgus* pronounced it unlawful

for any one to make his approach to Eleusis in a chariot. The votaries were not allowed to draw nigh unto the shrine of the Mourner, kind to man, and to whom they owed the gift of their daily bread, without having under their feet the *Διὸς κωδίων*, or *Jupiter's Skin*, that is, the skin of a victim offered to the supreme God. Not a little remarkable is it that the highest and purest doctrines of Greek mythology should thus, in connexion with its loftiest hopes, and its most stringent moral precepts, have been revealed to the purified, in the temple, common and indivisible, of those two divinities, who, interpreted in their elemental or physical relations, signify Bread and Wine.

Those who are attached to mystic interpretations will not fail to discover an occult meaning in the Eleusinian Priesthood, as well as in the mysteries it celebrated. The chief of that priesthood was called *Hierophantes*, or *Revealer* of sacred things. He was always an Athenian citizen: his office was held for life; and he was obliged to live in celibacy, and to

devote himself wholly to the service of the Gods. He was accounted a type of the unknown Creator of all things. He had three attendants. The first was called *Torch-bearer*, and considered a type of the Sun, the Enlightener, the Slayer of the Serpent, the Harmonist, and the Physician. The second, called *Herald* or *Crier*, was deemed a type of Mercury, the Messenger of Heaven, and Interpreter of the Gods; the God of Eloquence and Persuasion, who glided through the universe, invisible, or in any changing shape, with the speed of thought, and conducted the Souls to their abodes below. The third, who was especially the Ministrant, was called "*He at the Altar*," and regarded as a symbol of the Moon—that luminary which some of the ancient doctors compared with the Christian Church, because it is the lesser Light, ruling the night, and reflecting the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Besides these sacred personages, there were others also; among them a *Master of the Ceremonies*, who was always one of the

Archons, and four *Curators* elected by the people. Of these, one was always chosen from the sacred family of the Eumolpidæ, the descendants of Eumolpus, by whom the Eleusinian mysteries were instituted. In this part of the priesthood the hereditary element was therefore included, and the chain remained unbroken for 1200 years. The chief sacrifices offered were a mullet, and a little barley severed from the holy soil of Eleusis.

How are we to account for the extraordinary analogies between truth and fiction—between the guesses of the pagan intelligence and the Christian Revelation? That is too long and too grave a question to be discussed here: one observation, however, is so closely connected with the Eleusinia, that it need not be suppressed: There are persons who object to many things in the ceremonial, the discipline, or the government of the Christian Church, on the ground that they are analogous to much in the pagan rites, and, therefore, proceed from the same cravings of the

unregenerate imagination. Such matters may or may not be objectionable ; but this argument against them, too often inadvertently used, is one which would undermine Christianity itself. It is not to Christian Rites only that we find analogies in ancient religion, but to Christian Doctrines likewise, and to many of the doctrines included in the Creed itself. "If the Rites are but plagiarisms," the sceptic will say, "why not the Doctrines too ? You disclaim the Eleusinian lustration, and scorn the successive priesthood ; are you prepared to reject also the doctrines emblomed in the broken vessels and the wine shed abroad." In all these matters there is but one question for a reflecting mind ; namely, was the later Religion a patchwork of those which had preceded it ; or were the early religions of the world, on the contrary, attempts to feel after a truth congruous with man's nature, and intended from the first to be revealed to him ? On all grounds of philosophic reasoning, the latter solution seems to be the true one ; while

the former, if fairly analysed, is about as reasonable as the Epicurean notion that the world derived its being from a concurrence of atoms existing from all time. That Religion from the first intended for man was necessarily in harmony with man's nature, and the object of man's desire. Whatever was deepest in the human heart, and highest in the human mind, sympathised with and aspired after that Religion, which (human only because Divine) is the legitimate supplement of human nature, as well as its crown. To infer that Christianity is but a combination of human inventions, because it satisfies the more elevated human instincts, is about as reasonable as a moral philosophy would be which accounted for the maternal affection by concluding it to arise from a recollection of the pleasure the child had found in her doll, or which supposed that human politics had resulted from a minute observation of the Ant-hill and the Bee-hive. That surely is not a sound philosophy, which, like a concave mirror, inverts the objects placed before it.

confusing type and antitype, and assuming that whatever came first in the order of time, comes first also in the order of thought and moral reason.

Whence, then, arose those anticipations, as might seem, of many Christian doctrines and practices? Are they to be considered simply as the noblest exertions of the human intellect inspired by that moral sense which, however inadequate to support our feeble will, has yet been able to maintain itself, and, so far as it goes, runs, in its smaller circle, parallel with Revelation? Or are they traditions—broken fragments of that patriarchal religion which preceded the Jewish, and was connected by it, as by an isthmus, with the Christian? No doubt they are to be referred to both sources. We find remarkable traces in the Eleusinian mysteries of traditions later than the patriarchal, especially in the history of their supposed founder. He lived about a century after the great Hebrew legislator.

That founder was Eumolpus, son of Neptune



and Chione. His mother, desirous to conceal his birth, threw the infant into the sea ; but his life was preserved by Neptune, who carried him into Æthiopia, where he was brought up by an Æthiopian woman, whose daughter he afterwards espoused. An act of violence compelled him to fly from Æthiopia ; and he took refuge in Thrace, the king of which country received him hospitably, and gave him his daughter in marriage. After conspiring against his father-in-law, he was once more obliged to fly, and found an asylum in Attica, where he was initiated in the sacred rites of Ceres, and constituted Hierophantes, in the year B.C. 1356. Having been reconciled to his father-in-law, he inherited his kingdom, and thus united in his person the royal and the sacerdotal office. Erechtheus was at that time king of Attica. Between him and the great high-priest of Eleusis there gradually arose that jealousy which from the time of the Judean kingdom to the Papal has so often divided the civil and ecclesiastical powers. They met in battle, and

both were slain. Peace was concluded on the terms that the royal office should ever remain in the family of Erechtheus, and the sacerdotal in that of Eumolpus. The kingly power ceased with Codrus in less than 300 years from the time of that treaty : the priesthood remained with the Eumolpidæ for 1200 years. The Eleusinian Mysteries themselves lasted for about 1800 years. In the reign of Adrian the ritual was transferred from Eleusis to Rome. It was abolished by Theodosius the Great.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PEIREUS—ATHENS.

The Peireus—Disappearance of the ancient fortifications—Incompleteness of History—Ruined Temple near the Peireus—Tomb of Themistocles—Greek Politics—Small progress which the nation has made—Greek education—Mr. Hill—An Athenian school—Greek hymns and music—A Philhellenist—The modern language—its relations with the ancient—Advantages which modern Greece may derive from her ancient literature—Benefit from select study.

THERE are few things in the neighbourhood of Athens more worthy of note than the harbour of the Peireus, and the two adjoining ports, with which Athens was united by the lines of fortification executed under the rule of Themistocles and of Pericles. Along the line of coast, which, including its indentations, extends for about six miles, considerable remains exist of the ancient walls and towers. Like most Athenian ruins, they consist of huge blocks of stone put together without cement, and consolidated by their own weight only. Unfortunately, but little care has

been taken of these interesting remains, many parts of which have supplied materials for recent buildings. There is still, however, traced a continuous mass of wall along the margin of the sea, and within the peninsula, connecting the most easterly bay with the "long walls" of Themistocles. The ancient town of the Peireus extended over the whole space between the inner wall and the sea, as well as round the harbour which retains the name. It was as populous as Athens itself, and may be considered as part of the same city; for between the walls by which the two were joined, it is probable that there was a succession of houses.

The total fortifications of Athens must have been about twenty-two miles in length. The scale on which they were built we may infer from what we read of the walls of Themistocles, which were five miles long, each, sixty feet high, twenty broad, and five hundred apart from each other. How marvellous that such walls should ever have disappeared, and how plainly does not the ignorance under which we labour

concerning the causes which led to the overthrow of monuments, the subversion of which must have cost more persevering industry than the subversion of many a kingdom has done, demonstrate the fragmentary as well as the illusory character of that muse-indited newspaper—History. The history of the ancient world may, perhaps, one day be written. Every little discovery of medal or coin supplies us with materials which those who come after us will know how to apply, each in its place : and the mere lapse of time cannot be deemed of paramount importance in the matter, considering the extreme difficulty with which we ascertain the truth respecting occurrences not a year old. Philosophers assure us that a man never finally forgets anything which he has known ; and that all that has been swept by the current of daily life into some odd angle of the soul is sure to make its appearance again. The human Race, also, doubtless will be allowed to recover the lore it has lost, and to contemplate, from a height, that course — so erratic, so broken, so

often retrograde — which it has traced during its sojourn on this planet. In the mean time, the traveller in the East is constantly reminded of the fact that countless events, as wonderful as those recorded by the chronicler, must have taken place on ground with the annals of which it pleases us to fancy ourselves familiar. If we encountered a city in the Punjaub girt with such fortifications as those of Athens, should we think it necessary, for our own security, so completely to destroy them, that the traveller should grope for their site with a map in his hand? Should we not think of the expense first? To have obliterated the walls of Babylon must have cost more labour than to have built the metropolis of many a modern nation. Yet in our compendious views of history, we think it sufficient to say, “The city being taken, its fortifications were dismantled, in order to render future resistance impossible.”

Whoever can content himself with trivial remains of great things will, notwithstanding, be interested by the fragments of the “long

walls," as well as of the towers by which they were strengthened at intervals. On a promontory that projects into the sea, there are also ruins of a temple without name or history. To the height of six feet, some of the pillars, which are not fluted, remain erect; and portions of the others lie scattered around. It is not surprising that this temple should have given way; for its base is hardly raised above the level of the sea, which rushes, blue and green, up to its feet, and drenches in showers of rainbow-misted foam its dark and rifted shafts.

Close to this temple, remains what is called, and justly, we may guess, if the account given by Pausanias is to be relied on, the tomb of Themistocles. It consists merely of an oblong hollow carved out of the rock, and lapped against by the sea, which it engulphs with a complacent, half-plausive sound. A legend, if no more authentic tradition clung to the spot, would more probably have called it the bath of a Nereid, than the grave of an hero. Notwithstanding the Athenians, who understood what

was decorous and fit, did well in interring their great statesman by the element he had loved, and over which he had given them the mastery. They had exiled him it is true, but not until they had allowed him, what probably he chiefly desired, a sphere for his greatness, and the means of serving his country.

Ignorant and petulant censors, and some of a better class, are moved over much by the petulant and ignorant ingratitude of the people towards their benefactors. Benefits which have been felt by the poor at their hearths are commonly not forgotten, and are never resented ; for these come home to the individual being, and of these the motive is seldom open to misconception. Benefits of a larger kind affect the masses of the people ; but as the masses, be they grateful or ungrateful, possess neither the corporate existence and continuity of a nation, nor the personal life of an individual, so they should sustain an inferior responsibility. A statesman worthy of serving his country will think that the people have



acquitted themselves well by him if they have allowed him to serve it. If fame be anything, a great man's reverse is that which crowns his fame, and marks him with blight and blast apart from the crowd of the prosperous. The greater is not blessed of the lesser. Themistocles had saved his country and brought down the pride of Xerxes :—what more could his countrymen have done for him (more for themselves they might have done) than to have allowed his bones to repose in his native land ?

Not far from the tomb of Themistocles a monument has been erected to the Greek Admiral, Miaulis, for his merits in the late war of independence. It stands close to that plain which is memorable from the defeat of the Greek forces under Lord Cochrane and General Church. To any one who examines the ground their defeat is explicable enough ; in a large measure it is attributed to the chivalrous impetuosity of Lord Cochrane, who, notwithstanding, is said to have displayed extraordinary talents in the war. The Greeks

were originally in possession of the heights, but were induced or forced to relinquish this advantage by Lord Cochrane, who was tired of inaction and had resolved to eat his dinner on the Acropolis, at that time closely besieged. Without cavalry to oppose to that of the Turks, and without bayonets to resist their charge, the native forces, which numbered about 12,000, were broken almost at once on advancing to the plain, and driven back with great slaughter, several of them swimming to the ships.

The state of society at Athens has in it much to interest those who are not exclusively dependent on social conventionalities. In its small compass you meet representatives of most countries in the east as well as the west ; while the native population, in the midst of their unchangeable monuments, are obviously, both as to character and manners, in a state of transition as rapid as could have characterised a Greek colony in old times. How long the present order of things may last no one can guess, nor whether it will be

succeeded by a better or a worse. Hitherto Greece has made small progress as a nation compared with what was expected: how far those sanguine expectations were reasonable is another question. That want of progress is attributed by one party to the early lack of popular privileges, and by another to a deficiency of executive vigour. In the meantime it is certain that privileges are conducive to the public good, simply in proportion to the honesty and virtue which can be called in for their exercise;—and equally certain that a strong hand should be a steady and a just one. To a young country especially may be applied the well-known adage on the subject of forms of Government, “whiche’er is best administered is best.” Whether the Government originally instituted in modern Greece had been an absolute or a constitutional Monarchy, or a Republic, it would have equally amounted to the trial of an experiment without precedent in ancient history, in which we read of no form

of centralisation, but of States politically independent, municipally self-governed, and united by a very slight bond of confederation, but by strong ties of race, religion, language, and manners.

Whether it would have been possible to have again tried the experiment of antiquity, who can say? Who can tell whether the system of ancient Greece would have worked well of old, if, instead of having grown up spontaneously, it had been the result of an external arrangement made by foreign nations? Who indeed can guess whether in any case it could then ~~have~~ succeeded, if Greece, instead of being girt around by comparative barbarians, and thus consolidated into a practical unity, had been surrounded by nations who had outstripped her in civilisation, each of whom would have vied with the others in a policy of intermeddling, and the most aggressive of whom was the only one connected with her by a common religion? Be this, however, as it may, I hardly understand what reason the more

sanguine Philhellenists had to entertain those lofty expectations which have confessedly been disappointed. In the settlement of the Greek kingdom there was one "original sin." Unfortunately Greece had not been able to work out her independence by her own unassisted energies. This circumstance was in itself a proof that she was not yet in all respects ripe for independence, although the struggle itself had doubtless done something to prepare her for it. As a necessary consequence a Government was prescribed for her by the States which had given her, as they supposed, her Liberty ;

"A gift of that which is not to be given

By all the blended Powers of Earth and Heaven."

A nation, however, like a poet, "*nascitur, non fit.*" Those who give on such occasions seldom know how to give good gifts ; and those who receive seldom know how to work good out of evil, or even to use good without abusing it. Greece must have patience, and her destinies will shape themselves according to her internal

needs, of which she probably knows about as little as her advisers. If I order a coat of a tailor who never saw me, I must not expect to be perfectly fitted, and have some reason to be contented if I can keep it on my back. Every beast in the forest has a coat that fits him; but then he is at the trouble of growing it.

I took but little interest when at Athens in those petty disputes and jealousies of the "Russian party," the "English party," and the "French party," which are dignified by the name of Greek politics. I saw no reason to imagine that Greece had yet graduated sufficiently in that severely practical thing—a political education—to possess any politics: I doubted even whether her parties were quite worthy of the name of parties, and I felt pretty well convinced that the petty lore of her factions was much too complex for a foreigner to understand. This circumstance is fortunate for you as it was for me. Having picked up no gossip I have none to retail. If

you want the last report or the most recent scandal you will find them best and freshest in a newspaper. Greek politics are stale in a week, for no large principles are involved in them. If you do not drink the milk warm from the cow, you must have a credulous palate to enjoy it.

Greek politics, being in reality a question of the future, not of the present, will depend mainly on Greek Education. For knowledge the Greeks have an ardent thirst, like the Irish ; and their apprehension is so quick that they can master in a few months what others would require years to learn. Whatever amount of progress they may one day reach, they will always have cause to look back with gratitude to the efforts made on their behalf by Mr. Hill, an American Missionary of the Episcopal Church, who was, I believe, one of the earliest settlers at Athens, and to whom the cause of Education there probably owes more than to any one else. Mr. Hill came to Athens as a Missionary—directly, of civilisation and sound morals—indirectly, of

course, of religion also. He early perceived the futility of all attempts to withdraw the Athenians from their own Church, and was also too orthodox to endeavour to create a schism in a communion in which all the great truths of Christianity are maintained, in combination with the ancient ritual and ministry, though also in combination with many superstitions, the result of much ignorance. Accordingly, for years he devoted himself to the great cause of Education. The clergy did not prohibit their flocks from reading the Holy Scriptures, or from receiving religious instruction on subjects not controversial. His influence soon became great, and assuredly has been beneficent.

I visited, with equal surprise and satisfaction, an Athenian school which contained 700 pupils, taken from every class of society. The poorer classes were gratuitously instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the girls in needlework likewise. The progress which the children had made was very remarkable ; but what particularly pleased me was that air of bright alert-



ness, and good-humoured energy, which belonged to them, and which made every task appear a pleasure, not a toil. The greatest punishment which can be inflicted on an Athenian child is exclusion from school, though but for a day. About seventy of the children belonged to the higher classes, and were instructed in music, drawing, the modern languages, the ancient Greek, and geography. Most of them were at the moment reading Herodotus and Homer. I have never seen children approaching them in beauty ; and was much struck by their Oriental cast of countenance, their dark complexions, their flashing eyes, and that expression at once apprehensive and meditative which is so much more remarkable in children than in those of a more mature age.

The singularity of the spectacle was increased by the mingled character of enjoyment and decorum that belonged to it. The dresses of the children, many of which were of the national costume, looked as spotless as their pale radiant faces, and as carefully arranged as their hair.

which was almost always dark, and glistening in its heavy masses. Their gestures were eager at once and graceful, and their demeanour was full of reverence. Never have I seen such brows, and such nobly-shaped heads. These are, perhaps, the highest characteristics of Greek beauty ; but they are especially observable in children, and give them a certain rapt and inspired air. As I walked among them, I could hardly help asking "Which is to be the future Pindar ? That girl, does she not come from Tanagra : does she not boast that Thermodon is clearer than Ilissus ; and is not her name Corinna ?" Many of these children spoke English, and conversed eagerly about their studies. One of them in particular, a beautiful orphan from Crete, adopted by an American lady, to whom the Athenians owe much, expatiated, with brightening eyes, and a fairer dawn of intelligence on her brow, about the pleasure she had had in reading Plato ! Some of their drawings seemed to me to indicate much genius ; and there is no branch of their

education which they enjoy so much. Their singing master was an old Greek, who had passed many years in Germany, but who abated nothing of his vivacity on that account. If he was as dry as a cricket, he was as merry likewise. This old man seemed, indeed, to have gathered a double portion of his country's vivacity from the abundance of youthful life around him, and was never tired of singing among his pupils, whose confidence he had plainly won, and who clustered about him like birds upon a sunny old fruit-tree half bare.

I was asked to come again on Sunday evening, and attend their devotions, which are of a very musical character—an invitation that I did not require to be repeated. Before I had reached the threshold, a loud, clear chaunt from the upper part of the building struck upon my ear. Guided by the sound, I made my way easily to the “upper chamber,” which they used as their chapel. A little girl advanced to meet me, with a frank courtesy, and ~~placed~~ <sup>took</sup> in my hand, with the ready smile of

a child's hospitality, a Greek prayer-book, open at the place where they were engaged. It was a prayer from one of those old Greek Liturgies, which rank among the grandest of human compositions. The prayer concluded, the infantine congregation rose and chaunted in Greek the whole of the *Te Deum*. If the legend be true which attributes to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine that hymn which so marvellously combines the Creed, the Psalm, and the Prayer:—if it be true that, at the baptism of the latter, the two saints were seized with a common impulse, and recited that hymn, composing it as they proceeded, in alternate verses—they might have recognised an exultation not less fervent than that which they had themselves felt, if they had heard it chaunted by that youthful and jubilant choir. The passion of the south is a glorious thing when it is worthily directed:—it is then a light that illumines the intellect, and a searching heat that makes purity more pure. I well understood, on that occasion, why it is that in those lands where, commonly,

pleasure is too eagerly pursued, sanctity has also reached its highest elevation ; building, like the eagle, its nest on the summit of the mountain-walls whose base is hidden in myrtles.

Impassioned exultation was the chief characteristic of the song carolled by those dark-eyed cherubs. The nightingales in the mystic grove of Colonos, which allayed the heart and sounded the requiem of the blind king about to find rest at last in the Shades, had neither so impetuous nor so solemn a note. Certainly those children sang to God, and not merely "to the praise and glory of God, part of the 119th Psalm." In this respect their anthem illustrated what everything in Greece reminds us of, the extreme objectivity of the Greek character. Nothing human however is perfect, and I must add that there was occasionally not a little harshness in the music, owing to its extreme loudness,\* and to the fact that those youthful voices were not mellowed by the intermixture of any graver tones.

Among the benefactors whom the Greeks will long have reason to remember is a Scotch

gentleman, of the name of M- -. He visited Greece first as a Philhellenist, and practised, at Athens, as a lawyer, for some years after the independence. At first he was Attorney-General at Athens ; but he did not sympathise sufficiently with the politics of the Government to make it desirable for him to retain that post. For a considerable period he used to plead in the Greek courts, speaking the language with as much facility as the natives, with whom he was deservedly a favourite. His efforts for their improvement were chiefly of a literary character. At one time he established a periodical work at Athens, and published also translations from some of our orators and preachers. The latter are interesting specimens of the degree in which the modern Greek may be made to approximate to the ancient, composed as they are with a skilful adaptation of the ancient grammar to the genius of the modern language.

It is the opinion of many persons, better qualified to express one than I can be, that the

Greek language may one day be brought back to something not unlike what it was in old times. As for the pronunciation they stoutly maintain, that such as it is now it can be proved to have been in the time of Constantine, and that it probably was never very different. It is difficult to determine what may originally have been the sound of the vowels ; and as for the quantity of the syllables, a musical recitative may have assisted the reciter of Greek poetry over metrical difficulties which to us would seem insurmountable. I can hardly, however, regard the restoration of the ancient language as a thing possible ; nor is there much reason to think that, even if possible, it would be desirable. The early literature cannot in its own way be rivalled, and would only be vulgarised if its language were parodied. What the Greeks should aspire after is the complete purification of the modern language, and the gradual building up of a literature as analogous to the ancient as Italian literature is to the Latin.

I was glad to find that, in all the schools, the study of the ancient languages was much attended to. The modern tongue has been much improved by the weeding out of Turkish and Italian words, and by the partial restoration of ancient forms of construction. Fortunately, the Greeks possess no Grammar except the ancient, a knowledge of which is thus rendered absolutely necessary for the educated. It remains to be seen whether the different genius of ancient and modern times, and a corresponding moral diversity in mind and character, have not introduced insuperable obstacles to the restoration of the classical idiom. I have my misgivings on this subject; for language is assuredly a growth from character, moulded to it as the bark to the tree; and all nations have undergone a certain mysterious change of character (a change, probably, produced by degrees, but yet amounting to a change of type), the progress of which, if we could trace it, would be among the most interesting problems of history. If it were not for this inner and moral change,



the modern Greek would be, as compared with the ancient, not a distinct tongue, so much as a corrupt dialect. In its vocabulary it is as like the old Greek as our modern English is like that of Chaucer's time. The Greek Liturgy will be of incalculable use in the education of the people, bridging over, as it does, the interval between the ancient and the modern languages : and every Greek will soon, we may hope, be able to read the New Testament in the original.

In speculating on the future fortunes of the Greek race, it is impossible not to form high hopes from considerations connected with their language. Whether or not the modern language can be as nearly assimilated to the ancient as sanguine persons hope, it is certain that the whole community will be intimately acquainted with both. The mastery of two languages is not a difficult achievement for a community, as has long since been proved by the examples of Ireland, the Swiss cantons, and other countries ;

as Greeks have too much reverence for

their forefathers to remain unfamiliar with their tongue. What then may we not expect when that race which possesses probably the largest abilities of all European races are thus brought into contact at once with the noblest of languages, and the noblest of literatures? Their advantage will not consist merely in possessing close at hand, and entwined with their most cherished associations, the highest models in almost every species of composition; they are yet more fortunate in the selectness of their literature. Their classics will not be pushed out of sight, as ours so often are, not only by a crowd of works obviously ephemeral and worthless, and from which, therefore, all who have better taste, or any care for the culture of their minds, may be supposed to recoil; but also by multitudes of books of higher pretensions—the quasi-classics. Among us the wood is shut out by the trees: philosophy is hidden from us by the philosophers; and when we would pay our vows in the temples of poetry, the roads are so crowded with guides, (for the most part servants

out of livery), that we cannot push our way through the press. From this great evil the Greeks will be exempt for many a year. There will be nothing to prevent them from reading Plato and Aristotle till they understand them ; *Æschylus* and *Sophocles* till they know them by heart ; *Homer* till he enters like a burning fire into their souls ; and *Demosthenes* until his “winged words” have woven a vesture for their spirits, which will lift them up, like the divinely-wrought armour of *Achilles*, and bear them over the battle-fields of life.

And thus the essential spirit of letters may be theirs without their becoming crammed with books. It is hard to say whether the intellect suffers most from the lack of food, or from the indigestion that follows excess. Even men of large abilities are rendered mentally inefficient and valueless, if their minds are filled up with the thoughts of other men, a misfortune that frequently happens to those who possess a memory disproportionately large when compared with their other faculties. In the ac-

quisition of knowledge a proportion should be observed between what a man can take in, and what he can carry without impediment to free movement ; otherwise the sluggish sage will lie by as useless as a boa constrictor that has lately swallowed a stag, and has the horns still sticking out of his jaws. Such men may talk like an encyclopædia, but they will add little to the stores of original thought. Among them the lively Greek will not soon be numbered.

He will also, if he wisely keeps as much as he may to the stores of his ancient literature, be delivered from another still greater evil than that proceeding from a superfluity of books. He will not have his mind distracted, and his moral energies weakened, by the multitudinous *counter-influences* which assail the unfortunate student of modern literature. Our modern writers are heirs of all that have gone before them : but the inheritance being too large and somewhat heterogeneous, each author contents himself with occupying a part of it, and letting the rest run into waste. The consequence of this is, that

as different writers draw their influences from the most alien sources, the recent literature of every nation is a sort of Eolian cavern in which winds from all regions are in perpetual conflict, and the most energetic forces avail nothing, because no two of them tend one way. The Greek, in short, will have, if he does not throw away his advantage, the inestimable benefit of at once the best and the most select literature. Fortunate will he be if to this he adds no other reading besides that of those few palmary writers in each modern language, who may be considered to constitute the indigenous Bible—the *Book*—of the several nations, to which they respectively belong.

## CHAPTER XI.

### JOURNEY FROM ATHENS TO NAUPLIA.

Lazaretto at the Peireus—Greek Guardianos—An old Frenchman—Sail to Epidaurus—Ancient Character and Scenery of Epidaurus—Ride from Epidaurus to Nauplia—Extraordinary Vegetation—Remarkable Sunset—Gulf of Nauplia—Its Fortifications—Memorials of Venice—The Adieu of my French Friend—Good Fortune in picking up a Travelling Servant.

WISHING to visit Constantinople before I completed my tour in Greece, that I might have the more settled weather of advanced spring for my rambles through that country, I left Athens soon after my expeditions to Marathon and Eleusis. In order to preserve the continuity of my Greek tour, it may, perhaps, be better to postpone that portion of my narrative which relates to the farther East, until I have detailed the particulars of my visit to the Morea and to Delphi. On my return from Constantinople, I renewed my acquaintance with Greece through the disagreeable interven-

tion of a quarantine—an infliction to which all travellers in the east are obliged to submit.

I was fortunate in my Lazzaretto at the Peireus. Liberty, of course, I had not ; but I had the best substitutes for it—abundance of books, and a climate so fresh and sweet that every breath of air seemed to waft with it pleasant recollections of the brakes and bowers it had been disturbing. The year had advanced since my departure, but not sufficiently to call up those summer heats and sandflies which are the chief grievance a resident in Athens complains of. Every evening I saw the sun setting over the Bay of Salamis, and watched the waves, tinted with crimson, bound up against the tomb of Themistocles, and run slantingly along the ruined fortifications which still remain, his more authentic monument. The space allowed me for exercise was not very liberal, consisting as it did of a small court covered with broken stones, and a flagged terrace along the sea, extending in front of our prison. The confinement would have been

more monotonous if the spot had been an inland one : but the variety of sea and sky is great ; and whoever watches the lights and shades on the one, while he studies the clouds in the other, will discover that in Nature's great book there are countless pages which he has never had time to turn over, and with which he can never be more than superficially acquainted.

We landed late, were tumbled into the Lazaretto, and told to take possession of whatever rooms we pleased. They were all much alike, and my choice did not occupy much time. They were, however, altogether without furniture, and each person had to hire what he wanted. Never before did I know that I needed so many things ; and as often as my messenger came back I found that some trifle was still deficient. We were also obliged to hire two old men, guardianos, whose primary office, far from being that of protecting us, was to shoot us in case we attempted to make our escape ! Fortunately, the charge was moderate, and we did not put them to the trouble of executing the more



painful part of their duty. These men, though more than eighty years old, retained all the vivacity of their country, and many a time during the day I heard them pursuing each other in the court or corridor, pulling each other by the ears, or playing off practical jokes at each other's expense. One of them laughed much on observing the infinite trouble I had in ascertaining what articles of furniture I required, and came to my assistance, assuring me that he knew exactly all I needed. Acknowledging at once a superior genius, I submitted, and went to bed. Even then his attentions did not cease. He procured for me a pillow, and a second counterpane, in case the early morning should be cold—tucked the bed-clothes in carefully—looked at me once more—said, “*Adesso vi manca solamente la moglie!*”—and shuffled off before the good-humoured smile had vanished from his old face.

Day after day the attentions of my two old friends never flagged. They overflowed with that southern good nature which consists in

gratifying every one in his own way. My ways, I could perceive, surprised them; but they betrayed no intolerance on that account. They were much astonished at my pacing up and down by the sea half the night, lying in bed after sunrise, and taking no siesta; but they evidently considered these strange habits to arise from some necessity that probably affected all my nation equally. Still more surprised were they at my leaving the details of my dinner to the discretion of the cook who supplied it; and to a yet greater degree by my remaining nearly the whole day alone. Whatever my inclination, however, might be, they were always ready to comply with it, and generally eager to anticipate it. Observing that I wrote much they brought me, unasked, as many goose-quills as would have been sufficient to plume the wings of another Icarus, had I desired to soar beyond my prison walls. Towards the latter part of my imprisonment their attentions increased, and I soon discovered that the less trouble I took the more

certain I was to be supplied with all I could desire. I was unable to account for the extreme attention and kindness which they showed me, and for that affection and respect which, as I was assured by my fellow-prisoners, they always expressed for me. Not a little vain was I of the conquest I had so unwittingly made ; nor was it till we were on the point of departure that the mystery was cleared up—and that not in a manner the most flattering. The fact was that, after much thought, and many consultations, they had arrived at the conclusion that I was an idiot. This conviction was based chiefly upon two circumstances, first that I spent all my time reading or writing, and, secondly, that I did not eat oil with my salad. It was this estimate of me which had not only doubled their charitable attentions, but also conciliated for me an unbounded veneration. The only drawback was, that several times each day the two old men came to my window, flattening against the glass their wrinkled and smiling faces, leaning each his arm on the shoulder of

the other, and staring at me for about twenty minutes on each occasion.

I had but two companions in my captivity. One of them was a grave, determined-looking man, by birth half English and half Swiss, who strode up and down musing on some speculative improvements he had undertaken on a property which he possessed in Grece. The other was a little old Frenchman, with bright eyes, a shrill voice, and a weather-beaten face, puckered into more wrinkles than the skin of a shrivelled apple in winter, who passed his days questing about the courts and inquiring into everything, drinking coffee, shrugging his shoulders, lifting his eyebrows, making rapid generalisations on all that he saw, ventilating aphorisms, and imagining numberless untried modes of cooking macaroni. Economy seemed to be his great passion, and as soon as he had done everything imaginable to abate "the inflammation of his weekly bills," he began to extend the same kind offices to me, and insisted upon managing everything on my behalf, so that I was spared all

trouble whatsoever. He took indeed as much care of my pocket as if he had intended to pick it the moment we were out of the Lazzaretto—an action, however, which I dare say he would have been as far from committing as any one in the world. His assiduity arose simply from the circumstance that he had nothing else with which to allay the impatience of a feverish temperament, and a mind, the restlessness of which was not abated by age. If his bones had been all whalebone, his skin India rubber (flesh he had none), and his blood quicksilver, he could not have been more incessantly active. He seemed ever eager and never earnest, as if the passions, dried up in him, had left him to a fancy something more than ebullient, and to an understanding whose energies were always “on wires.” How often did I not hear the little man wrangling with the cook through the gratings of our courtyard, about my bill, ready to spit fire at him if there was an overcharge for pepper. Then he would come to my room, knock at the door, enter with a brisk bow and inflamed wrinkles,

lay the bill on the table, and say, "My maxim is, that it takes three Greeks to make one Jew ! Hardly would they leave a tooth in your head if it arrived to you to be caught napping. Certainly I have been sent for your salvation. It is Telemachus and Mentor over again. Adieu ! I must see about the coffee, or they will burn it. They are very capable of burning it if my eye is off them for a minute. Ten times a day do I call them one couple of apes in their dotage. Adieu, monsieur ! Your Swiss friend lose much by his grand speculation : he takes no advice ; his hand big enough to keep his pocket empty."

It was chiefly at dinner that I met my companions, and as two out of the three were somewhat taciturn, it was fortunate that the third was able to talk enough for us all. He inquired much about my travels, considering them, however, simply in a pecuniary point of view. "How much did they demand ?" was always his question, and when I had mentioned what I had paid, up went the eyebrows and

shoulders, down went the corners of the mouth, and sometimes even down went the knife and fork, as he exclaimed "Voila! twice—three times—Mon Dieu! four times too much!" In return he gave us a long account of his adventures during a sojourn of many years in the East, the chief result of which appeared to be that he had stored up an inexhaustible supply of maxims, by which whatever he did was determined. He had a farm in Greece, but made nothing by it, owing, as he affirmed, to the ignorance and stupidity of his neighbours. Notwithstanding he became rich by economy; for it was his maxim that money was more easily kept than made. Many years before he had carried off a Turkish woman from Constantinople. He had also married her, for, as he said, "Why not? She made a very good wife. As for her religion, it was a rule with him not to interfere in such matters. His maxim was that the feminine department of every household was best left to the women. She might turn Christian if she liked it. Why

not?" Everything excited this practical philosopher, and nothing agitated him. On my mentioning that I intended to travel in the Morea, his reply was, "The robbers will cut off your nose and ears—just hand me the mustard—they will treat you as they did my son, who had the misfortune to be assassinated by them two months ago:—What execrable mustard: he shall not put it into his bill!" The little old man was as hard as if he had been beaten out of old nails, and yet not without good-natured impulses.

After passing but a single day at Athens (our captivity over), and visiting the Acropolis once more, I set out on an expedition to Epidaurus, Nauplia, and the ancient Argos. At the Peireus I procured a boat without difficulty, and set sail, my French friend travelling with me as far as Nauplia. A favourable breeze arched out our canvas, and the little boat ran, with a pleasant murmur, through the smooth and shining water. its garrulous babble for the most part accompanied by another sound as unceasing, the



chatter of my companion, who seldom ceased speaking, except to take snuff. Ere many hours had gone by we had left Salamis on our right, Egina on our left, and the mountains of Epidaurus began to define their outlines. That night we had to sleep as well as we could in the open boat. The next morning we found ourselves in a bay clasped by mountains, which sloped steeply down to the sea in every direction except one. That exception was the entrance to a long and sinuous valley, which, though level with the water, appeared, from the shadow that slanted across its remoter end, to wind downward with a soft descent. Its short and dusky grass was still grey with the morning dew ; but the sun which had risen as we landed struck with reflected beams the western rocks, near its marble portals, and flashed upon a few stunted pines that plumed its crags.

The glories of Epidaurus are past away. While the triumphs of military as of religious architecture remain still in many parts of Greece, no vestige is found of the city dedicated to the

Power who presided over the healing art. The region of Epidaurus was consecrated to Æsculapius, the son of Apollo and the nymph Coronis, because it was on one of its mountains that the child, exposed there by its mother, was found by a herdsman, attracted to him by the golden beams which played about his head, and shone through grass and fern, as a she-goat of the flock suckled the infant. His temple was one of the largest in Greece, and under its protection, and the influence of a salubrious climate, innumerable establishments for the infirm gathered around. To these were added, by degrees, all that the sick or the idle need to amuse them—theatres, places of entertainment, public baths, libraries for the studious, and groves for the thoughtful or the sad. Gradually Epidaurus became a place of resort to patients from every part of Greece, acquired its peculiar privileges and usages, and may, therefore, be considered as one of the centres of Hellenic unity. Its monuments have crumbled into dust, like the bodies of those who found relief there:

its serene beauty remains ; and if quiet scenes, fit to store the mind of a sufferer with images of peace, if cold groves, if dewy and secluded pastures, and gales as refreshing as ever ascended “from the fields of sleep” to fan a fevered brow, be auspicious to health, the region of *Æsculapius* is still potent to remove some real maladies, and many an imaginary disease.

We rode on through this valley, which in some places became narrow and rugged, for many miles, stopping occasionally to look back, through a vista in the olive woods, or from an eminence that surmounted their grey-green roof, upon the Epidaurian bay, girdled round with its mountains and its mountain isles. Our guides were impatient of these delays, and warned us that we should be late, and that the way was not easy. In this they spoke the truth. Spring had caught the pathway in her nets ; our horses with difficulty pushed on, now along the gravelly bed of a river, half overgrown with oleander, now among rocks thick with arbutus, and now among brakes of almond,

which left the coat, both of horse and rider, richly variegated with white and pink flowers. Never, surely, was the Bull that carried off Europa as richly attired as those unfortunate animals who swung about their long tails as a terror to gadflies, and would have heartily rejoiced in a cool plunge into the "ocean stream." All the flowers in the world seemed to have met to produce the affluent vegetation which withstood our progress ; the eye, however, could hardly stray to anything else, so charmed was it with the tree which plainly had the mastery in the floral strife. The Judas-tree flushed the hill side sometimes for a quarter of a mile together, with its roseate thickets. Every sunny mound was enriched, every shadowy recess, at the angle of a stream, was lighted by one of those "incense-bearing trees;" while the dew-drops (still secreted in the shade) trembled in galaxies from its branches, or fell in glittering showers when the birds dinned the air, and shook the spray, with a more than usual impetuosity. Under them and around went on

the impatient workings of the Spring, whose progress and pulsations one could almost have fancied were palpable. The plant which produced the most brilliant effect, next to the Judas-tree, was the cistus, which trailed its leaves, not only over the fragrant carpetting of thyme and lentiscus, but also over the holly and laurestinus—nay, which often littered the broad roof of the ilex with its starry bloom, and scarcely abstained from the olive itself.

No sooner had we lost the last views of the bay of Epidaurus, than the gulf of Nauplia lay before us, surrounded by its mountain ranges. Those mountains are yet higher than the Epidaurian, and seen from the point of view from which we contemplated them, presented that fortunate combination of outlines which is but seldom to be found in the noblest mountains, and which fills the eye with a harmony as satisfactory as is impressed upon the ear by a perfect chord. Over the broken foreground of the steep which we had nearly ascended, six or seven different mountain chains were visible at

once, retiring behind one another, and the loftiest covered with snow. Our sunset was past ; but they were enjoying theirs still, and bathed in floods of crimson and gold, the remoter ranges being clad in a paler lilac, while their glens were streaked with shadows of a dimmer violet. Even my little old Frenchman I thought was moved by the sight, for, though he had been much disgusted at the length of the way, a gleam of satisfaction suddenly broke out, wherever there was room for it, on his rugged and crumpled face. “ Napoli,” he said, “ is near ;” and added, with a violent shake of the bridle, and kicking his little foot into the side of his horse, “ Allons ! the dinner attends us ! ”

A reflection of the same sort seemed to occur to our horses, or else the cooler breeze of evening had refreshed them, for they put out very willingly their strength, which hitherto they had apparently been *economising* as carefully as if they had been indoctrinated by my companion. On they went at a brisk pace ; my friend’s tongue

was also once more unloosed, and again he scattered on all sides a countless multitude of maxims and aphorisms. As the road descended the hill, our speed increased ; our guides, and those who had attached themselves to our party (for the Greeks are gregarious, and a horseman soon attracts a swarm about him), singing, shouting, laughing, and making more noise in their advance than a troop of cavalry. By the time we were in a canter, my horse put his foot on a round stone and fell, the rest of our cavalcade immediately closing in upon, and very nearly riding over us. Instantly my friend had reined in his mule, turned back his head, and addressed me with the utmost politeness : “ *Est-ce-que Monsieur est mort ?* ” “ No,” I replied, “ but my horses’ knees are broken.” “ *Allons, allons, mon cher, montez toujours,—le dîner nous attend,* ” was his rejoinder. On, once more, we galloped, and reached Nauplia just as the mountains beyond the bay had let go their last hold of sunset. A pale green twilight sky stretched behind them in clear infinitude, “ serene as the age of

the righteous." Two long, thin clouds, dark, but with a glossiness about their edges, smooth as a nautilus shell, and shaped with an indescribable sweetness, floated far away into that green distance. One of them was lost before we had dismounted.

While my friend went into the inn to order all things aright, I made my evening tour of inspection. I was well rewarded. The gulf of Nauplia is on a grander scale than that of Salamis or Corfu, and in all respects leaves the over-celebrated bay of Naples far behind it. The mountains that surround it are real mountains, and the wide expanse of water is proportioned to them. The predominant character of the scene is that of a bright and jubilant majesty. Nauplia, so called, in old times, from a son of Neptune, was, during the middle ages, an important sea-port, and is now the most considerable city in Greece except Athens. It is strongly fortified by nature, and the hand of man has done much to add to its security. High up, on a crag that adjoins it, stands the



citadel, built by the Venetians. On many parts of the walls, which rise out of, and sometimes blend with the rock, you meet Venetian inscriptions, and are confronted by that far-famed lion, whose shaggy head and affluent mane still attest, in so many parts of the world, the past greatness of the "haughty Republic," which for fourteen centuries sat between the East and the West, and extended an iron or a golden sceptre far over each. The lions hold their ground still, and, I hope, may for many a year ; when I passed them, however, their rocky heads were so swathed over with the masses of blue flowers which had crept about them, that one might have almost passed them unscen. Such, perhaps, is their best security.

On returning to the inn I found that no one in it could speak a word of any language except Greek. Not being able therefore to enquire for my companion I walked in search of him all over the house. I found him where I ought to have looked first—in the kitchen. A pair of red slippers, which one of the women of the

household had lent him, engulfed his small feet : his head was surmounted by his tall black night-cap ; and he stood with his face to the fire, in earnest, and apparently angry, converse with a great iron pot boiling thereon. Not a word could I understand, for he spoke Greek, either because it was his “maxim,” that the contents of the pot were most likely to understand him, if addressed in the language of the country to which they belonged, or more probably because he was railing at three girls (though out of scorn he turned his back to them) who stood behind him wondering, and at the master of the house who sat cross-legged on the kitchen table, playing with a cat. Dinner was ready at last, and we sat down to it with a traveller’s appetite. “All this you owe to me,” he said : “without doubt, if I had not been there, they would have given you the cat to eat, and cooked it *diablement* beside. I find that they are all infidels and impostors. Three Greeks make one Jew ! Mon Dieu ! that I should live among barbarians !”

The next morning, discovering that there was

no one at Nauplia who could speak any language but Greek, I was much puzzled to know how I was to pick up a travelling servant or guide to conduct me on my way. I betook myself for assistance to my French friend, who was about to return to his unprofitable farm in the neighbourhood. I found him already in the saddle, his spectacles on his nose, his snuff-box in his hand, before him a small trunk containing his worldly goods, and behind him half a kid which he had bought on economical terms at the inn. "Voilà !" he exclaimed, when I explained my difficulty, "I always told you these men were barbarians. There is not one of them who can speak French ! With difficulty do they speak Greek. Often do they not understand me. My advice to you is to take the greatest care not to be murdered or robbed. Without phrase you must get a valet-de-place at once. Notwithstanding those are the worst impostors of all. Always it is necessary to economise. Adieu, Monsieur." So saying, he lifted up his hat and made me a low bow. His black night-

cap at the same moment slipped over his nose, and his horse trotted on. In a moment after I heard him chattering as fast as ever, making, no doubt, rapid generalisations, and prophesying to his guide concerning my approaching fate.

Somewhat puzzled by my position (though it was not the first time that I had found myself alone among people who could not speak any language in common with me) I turned into the town, resolved to wait quietly for some favourable chance, and in the meantime to see whatever was to be seen. Fortune, perceiving that I was not going to hunt her down, was kind enough to visit me without a very long delay. As I was inspecting the fortifications of the citadel, I heard a voice behind me, and, turning, saw a very nondescript sort of being, who addressed me first by the title of Effendi, and then by that of Eccellenza, and assured me that he was the man I was looking for. He intimated to me, moreover, that he spoke more languages than were heard at the tower of Babel ; a fact which I did not dispute, though

I doubted much his being able to speak two sentences of truth in any one of them from sunrise to sunset. Notwithstanding, I was very glad to engage his services : we soon got into conversation in Italian ; and after telling me that he had visited all countries, and recounting many adventures, he assured me that it was not for the sake of money that he proposed to accompany me, but solely with a view to my convenience ; and that he was ready to set off at a moment's notice, without specifying terms like another man, but simply on an agreement that he was to have five francs a-day, his board and lodging, a horse for himself, and another for his luggage, his expenses back from whatever place I might leave him at, a *buonamano*, and my good opinion, as well as lasting friendship. I told him that the terms suited me, that I already considered him an oracle, as well as a holy man, and a man of the world ; and that I should take him with me to Delphi and Patras, visiting first the ruins on the Argolic plain.


## CHAPTER XII.

### TIRYNTHUS—ARGOS—MYCENÆ.

The Ruins of Tirynthus—Early Specimens of the Arch—The Plain of Argos—Theatre carved out of the Rock—Acropolis of Argos—The Hereum—Antiquity of Argos—Homeric Recollections—Legendary History—A Night on the Argolic Plain—Contrast between Italian and Grecian Scenery—Colossal Ruins of Mycenæ—Gateway of the Lions—Tomb of Agamemnon—Stones of its Vault.

EARLY the next morning we mounted our horses,\* and in a short time found ourselves close to the ruins of Tirynthus, the most ancient monuments, at least of military architecture, to be found in Greece. Tirynthus was an ancient city in the time of Homer, and belongs to that age which survives in legend only, and has no part in history. It was the early residence of Hercules, and the home of Alcmena his mother. The legend that its walls were built by the Cyclopes will hardly seem extravagant to any one who looks on them,

and who is moved to as much admiration of them as Homer expressed. The citadel alone remains. Its walls consist of prodigious blocks of stone put together after a fashion ruder even than that usually called Cyclopean; those blocks not being perfectly wrought, and fitted into each other, but consisting simply of rocks with their upper and lower surface smoothed. I explored a long dark gallery, the walls of which are connected by huge stones that lean against each other, and meet at an acute angle. In another place the citadel is entered through a subterranean passage on a scale yet larger, the arching being in this instance effected, not by two stones, but by four or five at each side, meeting in the centre, and sustained by their own weight without any cement. And yet it has been affirmed by some that the Romans invented the arch—as if they could have discovered anything which escaped the penetration of the Greeks. It is much more likely that the Greeks did not admire the arch, than that they did not, at any period, under-



stand its principle. The main object of Greek architecture, from the time that it had outgrown its Asiatic associations, was simply beauty, and not either constructive vastness or mystic symbolism. For this reason the Greeks did not need the arch. It corresponded well, on the other hand, with the character of that great people who made the whole world pass under their yoke; and in that sense we are right in associating it with them. Building as they did so frequently with brick, the Romans were, indeed, dependent on the arch. The Herculean citadel commands nearly the noblest view of the plain of Argolis.

Traversing the greater part of that plain, I arrived, before sunset, at the site of the far-famed Argos—the spot sacred to Juno, and the most ancient in its records of any in Greece, with but one exception. It is remarkable how rapidly our impressions with respect to one object of interest are sometimes modified in the presence of another. A face which at first sight seemed nearly perfect becomes effeminate,



coarse, or betrays some other defect when contrasted with another face, not perhaps on the whole superior, but analogous to it, and yet in some particular different. My former impressions of Greece were thus in some measure modified on this occasion. When at Athens, the antiquity of all around me, as well as its beauty, was a thought seldom absent from my mind. Standing at Argos, and ruminating over its history, Athens seemed but an upstart which had shot up rapidly, and burst into short and sudden bloom, ages after Argos had been delivered from the disquietudes of mortal life. The early monuments of Athens date from about the time of the Persian war, B.C. 490. Argos and Mycenæ were traditionally great in the time of Homer some 400 years before—venerable in the days of Agamemnon, 300 years earlier—and began to exist more than 600 years previously, if we are to rely on the historians who affirm that the kingdom of Argos was established under Inachus in the year B.C. 1856. The kingdom of Sicyon alone

was yet more ancient, having been founded in the year B.C. 2089, about two centuries and a half after the deluge.

The remains of Argos are few, but are of deep interest. The chief of them is a vast theatre, carved out of the side of the hill that encloses the Argolic plain at its southern extremity, and situated beneath the Acropolis, a conical hill, not much less than a thousand feet in height. A few of the substructions of the citadel remain, but, unfortunately, they are mixed up with some of the Venetian fortifications. The theatre will, probably, last as long as the world lasts, hewn as it is out of the everlasting rock. Its steps rise one above another to an immense height, and are divided into three tiers, the lowest of which contains thirty-six, the middle sixteen, and the highest fourteen. From this theatre you enjoy a glorious view of another and a natural theatre, consisting of the plain of Argolis and the Argolic bay—one vast stage, half of it green and half azure—shut in by two semicircular ranges of

mountains. That view was enriched for an Argive with objects which we behold no more—with the walls and towers of Tirynthus to the east, those of Mycenæ to the north, and, beyond the river Inachus, but at a distance of several miles, the vast and lonely Hercum, or Temple of Juno. Of this temple nothing remains but some traces of the foundation. The fane of the Matron Goddess, like one of the chief Basilicas of Ravenna, was situated at a considerable distance from the crowded ways of men—a circumstance which, doubtless, added to its solemnity and to the devotion of her worshippers.

Ascending to the highest tier of those rocky steps, and resting there, I mused—as who must not have done?—on the revolutions which that plain had witnessed. It is, perhaps, well that such thoughts are but seldom realised by us:—a Greek, who had felt them deeply, would hardly have found much interest in the most stirring events of the late war, or in any triumph which can be effected by us creatures of an hour. We

would not allow ourselves to be driven if we did not wear blinkers ; and if we carried our heads high enough to see far before and behind us, our feet would be slow to move. That rock, which looked on me as a modern intruder, had, doubtless, looked equally so on the herald who toiled thither to inform the Argive people of the Marathonian victory. The classical age must have been regarded as a “ profane novelty ” by old men who remembered the traditions of the heroic age. The heroic age itself must have seemed secular and coarse, full of insolence and of self-will, compared with that still earlier patriarchal age, when Argos reposed under the shade of her hereditary kings, and bequeathed no history because she committed few crimes. The King of Men himself, “ Shepherd of his people ” as he was, may have seen many a graver head than that of Thersites shaken at that sceptre so unlike a crook, and been warned by many a priest besides Chryses that pride must have a fall. Homer, if from that theatre his eyelids ever felt the glow of a sunset which

he could see no more, must have known that his own poetry but preserved (reflecting, like the mountain ranges around, the light of a luminary past away) the sunset recollections of an age whose glory had vanished and was no more.

His song, however, has at least done what neither marble, nor iron, nor gold has done ;— it has preserved the memory of that heroic age. As I gazed on the scene around me, I thought not, at first, of Inachus or of Danaus, of Asia or of Egypt. “*Vixerunt multi fortes ante Agamemnona :*” notwithstanding, none of them recurred to my recollection. The drama<sup>1</sup> celebrated on the wide plain beneath me was the multitudinous, all-compassing drama of the Homeric Epic. A lost world found room to live again in that charmed circle. The horses grazing on the peaceful mead, far off, seemed the “tempest-footed steeds” for which the Junonian plain was celebrated : the poppies at my feet were tinged with the victim’s blood. I thought of that night to which Europe and the world are indebted for so much that is

highest in human intelligence, the night of the embarkation for Troy. The Argive host advanced towards the sea, lifting a forest of spears that retorted the last beams of day. Side by side, car-borne, in the midst, moved on "the brother kings of Atreus' royal race," peaceful heralds stepping beside, and leaning on the rein ; the sacrifice to Neptune far before them ; and boys and cymbal-tossing virgins closing the grave procession. They reached at last the shore. The sacrificial flame rose higher, and flashed from the wave. There was a pause, and then, once more, I heard the cymbals and the fifes, and, when they ceased, the grating of the "great black ships," as they were drawn down the strand, and the murmur of proud satisfaction with which they glided into the "divine sea."

Such reveries have no end. I saw Inachus land with his colonists, and hew down the primeval forests—Danaus steal from the palace where he had been hospitably sheltered, excite the people by pointing to the dried up streams,

and expel the last of the Inachian princes. I saw the last of his own race driven from the throne by the Heraclidæ—Argos captured by the kindred people of Mycenæ—the historian Pausanias wandering among its ruins, and copying its inscriptions. The moon, whose broad and golden shield had hung suspended above the East not long after the sun dropped in the West, had clomb high, and was pouring a white light far over the plain, before my ruminations had worn themselves out. My servant, meantime, had provided a dinner not far off, and had addressed me more than once without receiving a very definite answer. Once more he sidled up to me and assured me, “that the fowl he had ordered would be quite overdone, poor creature, unless I came to eat him.” My conscience did not allow me to keep a much-travelled, large-experienced man, like the Ulysses who attended me, any longer fasting; and when conscience is seconded by appetite, its mandates are seldom disobeyed. Accordingly, we descended to the modern Argos, a flourishing

village, and the fowl was absolved from the necessity of waiting any longer.

The house in which we passed the night adjoined the village, but stood apart from it, and was attached to a farm on the property of General Church. It was large, clean, boasted beds (a rare possession), and had a still greater advantage in being wholly free from the vermin that infest most houses in Greece. The night was one of those glorious, beaming nights of Greece, when all things rejoice in a splendour far diffused, when the face of nature betrays nothing of suspicion or timidity, and little of reserve, and her breast expands with confidence and pleasure ; a warm fresh night, in which a Helena or a Hermia might stray in the wilderness, and sleep in the moonlight forest without danger of injury. I could not go to bed, and walked for hours up and down the open gallery beneath the roof, watching the glazed and glistening field and fancying that I could catch a glimpse also of the glimmering sea, listening to the rustling of the plane-trees hard by and



fancying that I heard in its intervals the more constant murmur of the Inachus, as well as a soft and hushing sound which rippled up in every direction from the dewy grass. For a long time I could not imagine why images connected with Sorrento were constantly rising before me. "Am I not," I asked myself, "where I have long wished to be? Why, then, can I not be content with it? What have I to do with the Syrens' cave, the house of Tasso, the deep ravines, the heaving waters, or the tessellated pavements beneath them?" At last, I discovered that I associated the two places together, in consequence of that rich and delicate odour which embalms the air of each. Never, except on the "Piano di Sorrento," have I enjoyed a fragrance approaching to that of the Argolic plain by night, a fragrance which proceeded from the breath of the lemon-groves, mingled with that of the grass and its honey-dews, and lightened and pierced through by the thrice-sifted purity of the breeze from the sea. In many of the Greek bays this exquisite

odour salutes you, the plain being commonly as rich as the mountains around it are severe ; but in no other have I ever found it so delightful as at Argos, and that part of Italy which is like a fragment of Greece detached. I enjoyed it, I am sure, even in my sleep :—and so passed the one night which I spent

“ In Argolis beside the echoing sea,”

Before five o'clock the next morning, my trusty servant informed me that our horses were ready, and I rose refreshed, for a perfect climate serves us in a large part for sleep as well as food. We directed our course to Mycenæ, and the tomb of Agamemnon. On our way we passed a series of landscapes, in some measure analogous to what the nobler portion of Southern Italy (Magna Græcia) might present if it could get rid of its “holy bounds of property,” and open itself out with the same sea-like frankness and expansiveness. Rightly to interpret the best scenery of Italy, one should have previously seen that of Greece, although, for the most part,

the two are very different. The scenery of Greece is far more determined, and marked in its character. An Italian landscape wears often an ambiguous expression, the meaning of which is stamped by its architectural or atmospherical accidents. In Lombardy the dusky tower gives it something of a northern character ; near Venice the clustered domes make it look Oriental ; and near Pæstum its temples mark it Grecian. Italy has an equivocal loveliness, which, like some engaging but effeminate dispositions, allows its character to be for a time whatever may be impressed upon it by extrinsic circumstance ; its prevailing expression being that of an apprehensive and ever varying sweetness, so sensitive that it changes with every change in the clouds, and puts one in mind of Shakspeare's description of Cressida, " nay, her foot speaks." Greece is yet more rich where she is rich ; but her cliffs are lean and lofty, her rocks are marble, not tufo or lava ; her beauty has in it ever an element of the sublime, and reminds you yet more of a Pallas than of Aphrodite.

After a ride of some hours, we arrived at the ruins of Mycenæ, the most ancient, and in their size and architecture, the most wonderful of all Greek remains. The citadel of Mycenæ stood on the platform of a hill, about a thousand feet in length, and five hundred in breadth at the summit ; that hill being formed by the converging roots of the mountains as they descend into the plain, and being almost islanded by two mountain streams, which rush from their rocky sources and clasp its base. The walls which encompass the summit of this eminence are composed of stones so enormous that how they were ever placed on that height I cannot imagine ; nor was it until I had carefully examined them and observed the scientific precision with which they were fitted together that I could convince myself that they were other than rocks shaped with a singular degree of regularity. One of them which I measured was fifteen feet square, another was eighteen feet by twelve. These prodigious remains embrace an ample circuit, and vary much in their height, which

is commonly inconsiderable. The ruins of two gate-ways also remain, one of which sustains above its portal the most ancient piece of sculpture known in Greece—two lions carved in low relief on a block of green basalt. These lions are apparently the only memorials of an extinct school of art, as Homer's two great Epics are of a lost world of poetry. In a position nearly erect they lean against each other, separated by a broken pillar. Whether they had any remoter meaning, or simply expressed the Royal power of the Atridæ, we cannot learn. When we look upon structures which were ruins in the days of Thucydides we must be content with seeing as much as he saw, and knowing as little. There stood those lions ages before the first stone of the Parthenon was laid, and before Peisistratus had collected the poems which celebrated the King of Men ; and there, too, lay around them, even at that time, like Gods dethroned and wounded on the battle field, the Titan fragments which we still behold.

Not far from these walls I reached the end of

my pilgrimage—the tomb of the monarch who reduced Troy. Some antiquarians assert that this building was the treasury of the wealthy Mycenæ ; I know, however, of no justification for so unpoetical a theory. The mighty vault bears the aspect of a sepulchral chamber, such as an impassioned and sorrowing nation might fitly raise. To enter it you must descend slightly. The interior is a circular hall, forty-five feet in diameter, walled round with enormous blocks, and forming, at the height of forty-five feet, a dome so sharp as to resemble a hollow cave. Within this chamber is another of the same shape, and quite dark, twenty feet in diameter, and fifteen feet high. Over its entrance, to pass through which you must stoop, hangs a stone nine feet by seven in size. The largest, however, of these blocks is that which surmounts the outer entrance. I measured it, and found it to be no less than twenty-one feet by fifteen, and four feet thick ! Its size is the more wonderful in consequence of the elevation at which it stands, and its being only supported

at the ends. The stones of this architectural and monumental Stonehenge are cut perfectly smooth.

Such is the tomb of Agamemnon, the first and last captain of Confederate Greece, the warrior who led to a remote eastern strand what may be regarded as the crusading army of the ancient world, (since it fought to vindicate domestic rights, and to punish the perfidious and profane violation of hospitality), the chief before whose lifted sceptre the sword of Achilles dropped its point, the father of Iphigenia, the master, not unloved, whose fate Cassandra prophesied before his palace portals, tearing the prophetic fillet from her brows, when, at the instance of Clytemnestra, he had descended from his car, and planted his feet upon the rich carpets rolled to it from the gates—those carpets which the sea,

“Eternal dyer of the blood-red robes,”

had imbued with a Tyrian dye, dark as that stain so soon to suffuse the marble bath. The peaceful scene was not unworthy of the

memorials it enshrined. Behind the Acropolis hill and sepulchral chamber rose two vast rocky steeps, one of them luminous as day, the other dark with the shade of its broad compeer, the projecting spurs of that mountain range which girds, "with stony belt," the Argolic plain. All around, beneath the vault, and even among the fragments of the citadel, the ripening corn diffused a Lethæan sound, soft as the whisper in a death-chamber. The funeral feast demands its pomps as well as the wedding festival, and enjoyed them on this occasion; for in the shadow of those old walls the patches of corn were brightened with multitudinous poppies, purple and crimson, tinged as if with "Proserpine's ever-setting sun," and diffusing around their heavy opiate odour. Nature, too, was pleased, after her impartial fashion, to intermix the gay with the grave; and the bases of the slope, and the fields all around, were dressed in flowers of many a hue—the blue "forget-me-not," the convolvulus, the campagnola, lilies of every sort, with clustered bells and snowy urns—Irisés,



that bent low with their own weight, and seemed to listen at the ground—the abundant yellow asphodel, and countless flowers beside, which, wasting no grief on a king who had had his day three thousand years ago, transmitted, in their own brief hour, that vernal celebration which began in Eden, and rejoiced as if the child of Ceres had been that morning loosed from the Shades. Among them, as they waved in the breeze, the insects glanced : the Psyche floated above them, and the graver dragon-fly pursued his prey :—the bees also murmured in their tents a drowsy chime, half lost in the hoarser monotony of the two-fold stream hard by.

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WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE WALDENSES; OR, THE FALL OF RORA.

*A Lyrical Sketch.*

AND OTHER POEMS.

THE SEARCH AFTER PROSERPINE.

RECOLLECTIONS OF GREECE.

AND OTHER POEMS.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD.

ENGLISH MISRULE AND IRISH MISDEEDS.

JOHN MURRAY, LONDON.



PICTURESQUE SKETCHES

GREECE AND TURKEY.

By AUBREY DE VERE.

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# PICTURESQUE SKETCHES OF GREECE AND TURKEY.

## CHAPTER I.

### EXPEDITION TO DELPHI.

Arts of Antiquity—Way to Corinth—Nemea—Character of Greek Mountains—Greek Scenery and Greek Character—Corinth—*Isotraki*—A Child's Consolation—Embarkation for Delphi—Arrival at Salona—Gulf of Lepanto and surrounding Mountains—Flowers in Unreclaimed Lands—Greek Agriculturists—Plain of *Cirra*—A Parnassian Ravine—Rock Temples—*Castri*—Site of Delphi—The Sacred Cleft and Oracular Shrine—Loss of its Memorials—Fountain of *Castalia*.

MUSING much on the monuments I was leaving behind, I pursued my way toward Corinth. When we abandon our seat by the sea-shore, and walk inland, our ears are for a long time filled with a murmur as of many waters, and we fancy that the tide is still coming in all around us. It was thus that the images of those vast architectural rocks clung to my eyes ; and difficult indeed I found it to shake off the questionings

with which they filled the mind. Whence came those huge stones? How were they lifted? What strong impulse, or what sustained instinct, compelled an unknown race which lived thousands of years ago to raise them to the top of that steep, and to plant them one on another? Assuredly there are other forces in the world besides those connected with the physical needs or the selfish desires of men; and that is but a blind philosophy which takes no account of them. The passion, whether religious or patriotic, that separated those rocks from their mountain beds, and made them a wonder to all time, was a principle stronger than winds or waves, or the madness of the people. That must have been a marvellous race which was visited by such aspirations; and yet but for the accidental survival of Homer's poems, we should have known nothing of it. How comes it that no more accurate traditions existed of that race in the days of Pericles; for if they had then existed, they would not since have been lost? In the other fine arts, that race seems to

have made but little progress ; and yet the architectural monuments which it has left us suggest the idea that it must have possessed a knowledge of mechanical arts lost in more recent times. Centuries later, the love of the gigantic in architecture continued in many parts of the world, especially among the Romans ; and yet how seldom do we meet with anything approaching to those colossal remains ! Did this circumstance arise from the fact that mechanical inventions once known had been forgotten ; or did the sons of younger earth inherit a strength of nerve and sinew compared with which later races are degenerate ? When we call to mind the rapid bound in advance which the human family seems to have made within but a few centuries of the flood, and the works which they executed within the same period, we can hardly help imagining that the diminished duration of man's life is a type of a corresponding loss sustained in his physical and intellectual powers.

Such meditations must often, I think, occupy the mind of those who have visited the remains

of the "golden Mycenæ." If they should prove oppressive or perplexing, a better remedy can hardly be found than a ride from that spot to Corinth. On our left we passed near to the field of Nemea, the games of which, during successive centuries, concentrated the eyes of all Greece. Nothing now remains to mark the spot, except a stadium six hundred feet in length, and three pillars of the temple of Jupiter. Our way was but one degree less beautiful than that by which I had journeyed from Epidaurus to Nauplia. The more I observed them, the more I was impressed by the peculiar character of Grecian mountains which is different from that of all others I know. In Asia the mountains lift themselves up in smooth masses and solemn domes, white if the spring be not far advanced, otherwise green, even when seen from a distance, owing to the depth of the soil and the purity of the air. The Alpine summits pierce the blue sky with sharp wedge and glittering spire; and those of the Apennines rise up, ridge beyond ridge, like frozen

waves, and rake the clouds with rough and woody crags. Equally different from all these are the mighty terraces, and platforms, and mountain cliffs, which, in Greece, clasp as with a wall the bright bays, or the green plains—plains they must be called, not valleys, for they more often rise slightly toward the centre than are hollowed out into basins. The extreme luxuriance of these plains is in striking contrast with the majestic ranges that encompass them. which are not more graceful in their outlines than they are severe in their geological structure. Spare and lean, and bony, as it were, as the head of an Arab horse, or the hand of his rider, their rigid precipices rise perpendicularly from the fields and flowers, fleshed over with little vegetation except that of the wild thyme, so that at a little distance their colouring is that of a pale grey or lilac ; and while looking on them, you remember their marble quarries.

In every country we observe an analogy between the scenery and the character of

the people. In Greece I could never remark this contrast between the mountains and the plains without being reminded of an analogous difference between the character of the Greek intellect and of the Greek temperament. The former was pre-eminently severe, muscular, and masculine ; while the latter, even in the better days of Greece, tended to the epicurean and the unstable. Perhaps the charge to be brought against the Greeks is not really one which affects their peculiar temperament so much as it condemns them for having allowed their character to be so much determined by that temperament. The temperament, taken separately, ought to be, as theirs was, susceptible, apprehensive, open to all impressions of the pleasurable and the beautiful ; yet such a temperament will be but too apt to degenerate into voluptuousness and inconstancy, if it be not subordinated to a resolute will and a spiritual mind. The different portions of human nature have different offices, and can only work well when they work in due subjection, the lower to

the higher ; for the especial merit of the servant is often that which disqualifies him from the office of a master. The merit of the whole is something different from that of the parts. Scepticism, for instance, is very far from being a habit characteristic of the noblest intellects, yet the Understanding, taken as a separate faculty, is essentially sceptical ; although, working in subordination to the higher Reason and the Moral Sense, it does not necessarily lead a man to scepticism. Its especial office is to doubt, to try, to prove all things ; nor does the fact that a man possesses an understanding peculiarly subtle in sceptical inquisition demonstrate more than that he possesses a singularly powerful understanding. Such a faculty is likely to be dangerous or useful, according as he allows himself to be ruled by his understanding alone, or employs it in due and graduated confederation with higher gifts. The dull has little merit in not doubting, and the cold in withstanding the temptations of sense. It was the misfortune of the Greeks that during their declining period



the understanding gradually usurped upon the reason ; and the temperament, rather than the moral sense, became the representative of the man.

To return, however, from the Greek character to Greece. The day was propitious, and the ride, as agreeable as I could wish in every respect except one. My horse, very different from those which used to bound beneath me over the Athenian plains, had two serious defects : he would not go on unless I gave him a loose rein, and he could not stand on his legs unless I held the bridle tight. In other respects, as my trusty guide remarked, he was unexceptionable. Before many hours the castle-like Acropolis of Corinth was once more in view ; and, although the day was not far advanced, it already flung its mighty shadow far over the sea. Not without regret did I leave at my right hand the road to the eastern port, by which Athens is reached, and advance along that which skirts the gulf of Lepanto, terminating in Lutrarki, a little village about six miles beyond

Corinth, and constituting its western port. At Lutrarki I procured a decked boat; not fewer than eight boatmen insisting on being my crew, and engaging to take me first to Delphi, and then to Patras, where I was to meet the Austrian steamer bound for Corfu and Ancona. "How soon," I asked, with the aid of my interpreter, "shall I find myself at Patras?" "That depends," they answered, "on the delay you make at Delphi." "What ought to be the length of the voyage, independent of a visit to Delphi?" They laughed and answered "Ten hours perhaps—or perhaps a day—or two days—or (the eight men lifting up three fingers each) it may be three days." Finding that my Greek friends were far too shrewd to commit themselves to the calculation of an average, I dismissed from my mind all western notions of punctuality, and began to think of laying in store of provision.

It was with difficulty that anything of the sort was procured. Fortunately I had brought some tea with me, and all that I wanted in

addition was a little bread and milk. The bread was near at hand, and for the milk, my servant sent a messenger to a neighbouring valley, where it was reported that cows had been lately seen. As I walked up and down the shore, somewhat vexed at losing so favourable a breeze, I heard the boatmen clapping their hands in exultation ; and my servant, coming up to me with the importance of an ancient herald laden with the tidings of a victory, announced that he had made out a young pig, and that we should have a wonderful feast. "But the milk," I said, "what news of that?" Milk! he advised me not to think about it. He had already found out butter. Could I not put that into my tea? It was admirable butter—"veramente stupendo." After a little time the pig was cooked, and our party had eaten the greater part of it, when the wailing of a child from a cottage hard by assailed our ears. Now and then it was hushed, but it rose again more vehemently than before. I enquired what occasioned the lament ; and my servant replied

that it was no consequence, but that, in fact, the little pig had been a pet belonging to a child in the cottage, who was distressed at its untimely fate. Much shocked at his loss and at our Thyestean feast, I sent to enquire in what way I could make the child amends for the injury. In a few minutes three men brought me back an answer, (the Greeks always think that too many persons cannot be employed on the simplest errand,) stating that the child had at last been prevailed on to wipe its eyes, and had sent me word that what would please him most was a slice of the pig, with a good deal of fat attached to it. I sent it to him, of course, and lost as little time as I could in imitating his philosophy. Few things are more curious than the mode in which the affections, passions, and appetites change into each other. I have heard it asserted, that animals which eat their young, begin by licking them out of parental affection. It is a pity that the change should always be from the higher instinct to the lower. How interesting it would be to observe a human

instinct supervening upon an animal one—to detect Russia, for instance, betrayed into something like a parental affection for Poland, and seeking with her a union not stimulated merely by ungovernable appetite.

The delay was fortunate in one respect, as it enabled me to extend my hospitality to a Greek woman, a soldier's wife, who wished to make her way to Salona, where she was to rejoin her husband, and who applied to me for a passage in my boat. She looked interesting and was rather sad—why, I did not discover, as I could maintain no conversation with her in Greek. In the East, however, to talk is no necessary part of good breeding: people converse, or are silent, according to their mood: and as we sat side by side in the stern of the boat, we had, at least, the songs of the sailors to amuse us. No dolphin was attracted by that chime through the moonlit waters, and Arion, I felt persuaded, was a much better musician. When it grew late, I made over my cabin to my companion, who had, I fear, but a bed of gravel to

repose on, and lay down on the deck, roofed in by my many-skinned capote, the hood of which effectually protected my head without the aid of a hat. Our breeze slackened before we had sailed halfway from Corinth to Parnassus, nor could the sailors enliven it again by song, whistle, or malediction. I cared little about the matter, for I enjoyed the present, and saw, over that agreeable foreground, glimmering views of a future, which, even not so seen, would have been inviting. There I lay, sleepy, but sufficiently awake to hear the rustling of our keel as it slid through the water when the breeze for a moment filled the sail, and, during the intervals, the babbling of that sail in a lighter air. Through my half-closed eyelids I could see also the silver plane of the waters, and the red cap of a sailor bending towards me, now and again, as he dipped his head to let the boom pass over it. I remembered that before morning our boat would have drifted into the shadow of the Parnassian and Heliconian ridges—nay, that every moment, slowly as we

advanced, we were drawing nearer to the mystical centre of Greek religion, the fount of inspiration and the oracular shrine. It was no business of mine to hold the rudder : it was no duty of mine to pull the oar. I was contented—the world seemed to hang well-balanced on its centre. While I thus mused, I found that my head, at least, could balance itself no longer, and dropped asleep.

The next morning we reached Salona, and I bade adieu to my fair companion, who, I hope, soon rejoined her husband. We made each other very civil speeches on parting ; nor did it the least signify that neither of us understood the language of the other, as, no doubt, each interpreted in the best sense what was said with so much gravity. In spite of my servant's remonstrances, I refused to take horses, knowing that they would prove but a hindrance to exploring among the rocks, and not thinking a walk of five miles, terminated by Delphi, very formidable. The scenery of Delphi and its neighbourhood, I have no hesitation in saying, is the

finest that I have ever seen ; and I have visited all the most beautiful regions of Europe. The mountain ranges at both sides of the gulf are from eight to nine thousand feet in height ; and though many of the Swiss mountains are loftier, the table-land of the valleys from which you contemplate them is generally so elevated as to take much from their apparent height. Nor do I believe that the Swiss mountains rise to a greater height from the level of any of the lakes which they adjoin, than Parnassus rises from the Gulf of Lepanto—that noblest of lakes, whose breadth, vast as is the expanse, is never too great for beauty ; and whose shores are enriched successively with associations, Egyptian, heroic, classical, Roman, Crusading, Venetian, and Turkish.

The plain of Salona is ample, rich, and soft, swelling gradually and slightly upward toward the middle, and sinking, on one side, down to the mountain walls, and on the other to the sea. The green expanse is closed at its eastern and western ends by the mountains, which slant in



steep headlands into the gulf. The remoter border of the plain drops with an indescribable grace, and with curves that can only be compared to those of a human form, into three dark glens, which wind between cliff and crag into the labyrinthine mountains. Of these three glens the midmost is that which leads to Delphi. We had to walk at least an hour before we reached its entrance. Our way at first extended over a grassy expanse, if that can be called grassy in which the flowers out-number the green blades. That plain could not have been more richly carpeted if our vanished Eden had been buried beneath it, and strove to force its way up again. No one can guess the beauty of flowers who does not see them under such circumstances. A single flower is a beautiful object ; but if you contemplate many at once, it should not be in a trim parterre, where the space is trifling and the colours are arbitrarily assorted, but in those meadowy masses which deck the wilderness in lands at once fruitful and unreclaimed. Where the soil, unviolated for

ages by the plough, is rich as that of our gardens, and the climate is fresher than that of our parks, and warmer than that of our conservatories, Nature clothes the earth with flowers as lavishly as she clothes a tropical bird with feathers. In her abundance caprice has no part, and the harmony of colours always equals their profusion. So was it here. The poppies, the waving anemones, and countless flowers besides, extended their streams of crimson or of purple in long flowing curves, (each kind, no doubt, attracted by the soil that suited it best,) as if Spring had here emptied her urns with a prodigal hand, and flooded the world with glory.

Having traversed about half the plain, we found ourselves within an olive-wood which occupies its centre. It was not one continuous forest; for in the midst of its old and gnarled stems, through which the horizontal light of early morning levelled its shafts, rather tinted with green than blunted, there extended opens of all shapes and every size in which agriculture

began to encroach on the pasture land, or pasture to contend with the wilderness. Here, as in a colony, the newly-reclaimed land was too rich to require a careful culture ; and I was amused by the careless hilarity with which the peasants prosecuted their light toils. They knocked the ground (I cannot say they dug it) with a sort of shovel, the iron part of which was placed at right angles to the wood, so as neither to require them to stoop nor to lean their foot upon it. With nature's good will apparently, and without either solicitation or compulsion, they demanded the fruits of an unexhausted soil. In other opens amid the wood people were employed in harrowing the ground, a process which they effected after a manner quite as singular. The harrows of course required to be loaded, but the labourers were far above seeking stones for that purpose. They adopted a much simpler expedient, sitting cross-legged, after the Turkish fashion, upon the harrow, as close as they could pack, and allowing their grey or mouse-coloured oxen to drag it very

much at their own discretion amid the blades of struggling corn ; while they themselves swung about in their white kilts and red caps, laughing and telling stories. One hardly knew whether to call them labourers or revellers. Indeed thus drawn about they looked like nothing so much as sea-gods with monsters yoked to their car, who had feasted too long with Neptune, or the "blameless Ethiopians," and mistaken the land for the sea.

Emerging from the road and traversing the rest of the plain, celebrated in ancient times as the hallowed plain of Cirrha, we reached the midmost of the three ravines. We did not enter into its depths ; but scaling the precipice at its left side, followed its tortuous course along the higher level. Unwinding from the heart of the Parnassian mountains, toward which our faces were turned, that ravine gradually descended toward the plain we had left, long, dark, and narrow, walled at each side by perpendicular cliffs, which shone in a dazzling light rendered yet more glaring by its contrast with

a dusky and slender olive-wood that streamed like a river along the bottom of the glen, following its sinuosities, and tracking a narrow river unseen from the heights above. Slowly, though the way was smooth, we advanced along our ascending terrace, which was girt on the left with mountains, as was also the terrace that surmounted the precipice on the opposite side of the valley. Slowly I advanced, for it was into a region of wonderment as well as of beauty : at every step new objects disclosed themselves with a bewildering profusion ; every turn opened out a longer perspective of white crags and rocks jutting out to rocks ; and every rift in the mountain walls at each side revealed some distant peak, the base of which was hidden in cloud, while its snowy summit flashed in a separate chasm of azure sky, and glanced over its separate gorge into the sacred domain of Apollo.

As we ascended, the air was refreshed with cooler gales from the regions of snow, and with the narrowing glen the shadows grew more

dense. Contrasted indeed with the white rocks at the opposite side, and with the small white cloud which was occasionally blown into our ravine from a neighbouring glen, (for each glen has its own breeze, which wanders through it as through the tube of a musical instrument,) those shadows, dim and watery in all places, lay beneath the projecting ledge, dark as a raven's wing. Here and there we passed chambers excavated in the cliff, with what intent it is hard to say. The larger looked like rock temples : the smaller were apparently vaults for the purpose of interment, constructed perhaps before the Greeks began to burn the bodies of the dead. These small chapels are all of them perfectly symmetrical and almost quite dark. The roof of each consists of an arch in the rock : opposite to the entrance, and at each end, is an oblong hollow, excavated out of the stone, and resembling a sarcophagus ; and over each sarcophagus the rock is vaulted so as to form a sort of pall. As we drew nearer to the Delphic shrine these monumental chapels

became more numerous ; and we passed also many cells carved in the rock, and plainly intended for votive offerings. Here and there we came upon blocks of hewn stones, and the substructions of mighty walls ; as if the platforms had once been crowned with temples, or as if some race past away, taking the hint from nature, had converted the symmetrical terraces of mountain and cliff into a more regular architecture.

An hour after we had entered the glen we arrived at the village of Castri, built in the neighbourhood, if not on the site of Delphi. The ancient city breaks up here and there through the new village like round stones in a road gradually displacing the gravel with which they had been covered, or some indestructible religion forcing its way back through younger superstitions. Wandering among its narrow streets I frequently came upon a gigantic capital pointing its polished traceries through the weeds that had grown over it, or a fragment of a cornice carved as delicately as if it had been

an altar. In many places indeed the houses were half new and half old ; the lower portions of the walls, or at least the foundations, consisting of the ancient masonry, upon which was piled a modern superstructure of pebbles, mud, wood, and straw. The effect <sup>\*</sup>was singular, and reminded me that thus also the whole of the domestic and social system of Greece had apparently rested upon the foundation of its great religious ideas—a circumstance, however, by no means peculiar to the Grecian, or, indeed, to any ancient polity. The situation of Castri thus nestled high among its rocks much resembles that of a Swiss village seated on some aerial elevation, amid its grey ledges and its grassy slopes. The difference, however, is as striking as the similarity, and consists in that marvellous union of luxuriance with sublimity which characterises Greek scenery. Around Castri, in place of orchards white with apple blossoms and rough with knotted sprays, was the green and golden lemon-grove, with pale yellow fruit, and smooth leaves, the younger of them trans-



lucid. The little lawns amid the cliffs were waving with anemones, (the thinnest floral texture almost that can sustain the weight of colour,) not set in orderly array with flax and peas. The breeze, heavy from the orange bower, was met by the healthier sea-scented gale, which snatched a blossom from the almond-tree, or dropped a feather from an eagle's wing upon the breast of the myrtle thicket.

A very short distance further on is the sacred cleft, close to which stood the oracular shrine, and out of which issued that intoxicating vapour upon which Apollo once scattered, as was deemed, the might of inspiration. The cleft is a narrow chasm in the rocks, which in this place very nearly approach each other, and are quite smooth. Its length is considerable ; gradually its breadth diminishes ; and it is so lofty, that the sky seen above it looks like a strip of purple ribbon. Adjoining this cleft, was the temple of Apollo ; the face of the rock, at right angles with the chasm, was the inner wall of that temple, and not only retains

the mark of the chisel, but is also different in colour from the rest. Its vast tablet is still sacred from weather-stains and from vegetation; but its summit and its edges are fringed with yellow flowers, of a kind which I have not seen elsewhere, and of which I carried away a handful as relics.

No other trace of the Oracular Temple remains. It is gone, with all its sacred treasures and mysteries. We look in vain for the mystic tripod, from which the Pythia, who had breathed the inspiring vapour, flung abroad her prophecies in agonistic ecstasies that terrified the priests who beheld her, and sometimes deprived her of life. Its shrine no longer contains the gifts of kings, Asiatic and European, or the trembling elliptical stone, supposed to have been the centre of the earth, the spot at which met the two doves which Jupiter had loosed from the opposite extremities of the world. As vainly do we look for the triple serpent of brass, found in the Persian camp after the battle of Marathon, and deposited here for centuries.

Yet Delphi has still its memorials, though when you seek the Oracular Temple (the heart of the Greek religion), you find, as on the site of the Eleusinian mysteries, a blank. Such a blank is perhaps not to be regretted: the ardent desire that a visible memorial existed, is in itself a spiritual memorial; and the chief sanctuaries of ancient religion, if obliterated, have at least escaped a worse profanation. That fane, the opening of whose gates each spring shook the ancient world with hope and fear, and sent a tremor of expectation through the hearts of kings, fell, and no one knows when:—it slid from its basis into oblivion without a sound, like the nest of the bird that built amid its eaves. The treasury of Croesus, memorable for his piety as for his wealth, is gone also; and we look in vain for the three thousand statues, brazen, golden, and marble, which once adorned the streets of Delphi. The Hall of the Amphictyonic Council, the political centre of Greece, and the body whose decrees every Hellenic State had vowed to enforce by arms, has also disappeared. Some

traces of an ancient Stadium are still visible, as well as many fragments of the city walls. The chief memorial, however, of classic times and mythic dreams is one which nature created and which nature maintains, renewing it momentarily as it fleets away,—the Castalian fount. Fed from above by the Parnassian snows, it sparkles and chimes in the basin hewn for it out of the rock ; and falling from the lofty region on which Delphi stood into the ravine which we had tracked on our path thither, mingles its waters with the river Pleistus ; after which, receiving some tributary streams on its way, it winds through the plain of Cirrha, and finds rest in the waters of the Crissean bay. I drank of it and washed both face and hands in it. Whether it still confers the gift of poetic inspiration, as when the Muses danced around it, I cannot say : I can assert, however, that purer or fresher water is not to be found.

## CHAPTER II.

### RETURN FROM DELPHI.

Character of Parnassian Scenery—An Olive Wood—A Storm—Dance of the Greek Boatmen—Revels on the Shore by Night—Moonrise—Philosophy of the Oracle—Demonic Inspiration—An unnecessary Supposition—An Imperfect Faith ever placed in Oracles—Physical Effects of the Delphic Vapour—An Extraordinary Penetration assisted by Imposture.

LULLED by the sound of the Castalian fountain, and cooled by its freshness after the pleasant fatigue of a long ascent, I lay on the grass in a sort of dreamy state, half asleep and half awake, until the day was far advanced, and my guides were eager to return. I bade adieu to Delphi, not without regret, but yet with a strong sense that there is less cause for regret in leaving what is of first-rate than what is of inferior excellence; because, in the former case, one carries away recollections that can never die, and thoughts perhaps the seed of brighter visions than those which we have lost. On my

way to Delphi I was often hurried forward by my impatience : on my way back I was glad to loiter, and thus had more opportunities of studying the scenery. That scenery united qualities which Nature alone can combine without confusion, presenting, as it were, the essence of all species of material beauty elevated and enlivened by a spirit peculiarly its own. I have already remarked on its union of sublimity with richness : not less remarkable seemed to me its union of mystery with joyousness. Its beetling cliffs and promontories looming through cloud affected the spirits with nothing of mountain melancholy ; its snowy ranges looked neither ghostly nor forlorn. For this circumstance it is not easy to account, but we can at least explain it in part. There were no pine forests, with their mournful sighs and monotonous whispers ; there were no glaciers to speak of endless winter colder than the grave. These mountains, lofty as they are, wear the sunny livery of the south, and opening out their breasts to a southern exposure, seem to enjoy

a double portion of the Sun-God's favour. From this circumstance, as well as from the light colour of their rocks, whose smooth expanse reflects the light like a shield, and from the glorious pageantry of the vegetation wherever a flower can find room to grow, arises the fact that, from the countless peaks of snow that sparkle above you to the crocus at your feet, the character of the scene is jubilant, not less than sublime ; that it lifts up the soul without ever casting down the heart ; and that, though from its complexity it is bewildering, it yet never oppresses the spirits with awe. The Sun-God looks through the mountain labyrinth as through his own laurel, and drowns its terrors in light. Had it not been for these peculiar attributes, the scene would never have been frequented and celebrated by the Greek. As in some specimens of the Italian Gothic, an attempt was made to blend with that character of infinitude which belongs to Gothic architecture, an ornate beauty of detail and an elevated festivity, so, in these Delphic mountains, nature

seems resolved to astonish and entrance without subduing. The mystery is lightened, but the marvel remains.

This hilarity of effect was more observable on my return from Delphi than on my way thither, because, as we descended the hills, the ravine widened before us, letting in, every moment, a larger as well as a more various view. At every step the mountains about the sea were clustered in new and more fantastic combinations ; while, gleaming through their glens, the Gulf of Lepanto appeared now like a river, now like a sea, and now like a series of lakes, various in size, and apparently at different elevations. This part of the Parnassian scenery is the most wonderful, but not, I think, the most beautiful. The most exquisite spot, I should say, is to be found a little beyond the line where the mountain crescent sinks into the plain, and at the confluence of the three ravines. Here spreads the olive-wood, through which I passed in the morning. On my return I had more time to explore it, and in its heart I discovered a scene



which I found it difficult to leave. It was a little lawn, formed by one of the opens in the wood, richly carpeted by flowers, and looked down into through woodland gaps by many a peak of snow. Through this lawn the two streams already named pursued their way from Parnassus to the sea. Obstructed in their course by some rocks, they divided into innumerable rivulets, which, branching abroad in all directions, veined the gravelly ground with silver, now gliding side by side in their beds, now mingling, now crossing each other, but ever interweaving their songs as well as their dance. One might have fancied that all the nymphs of ancient mythology had met in this peaceful spot to keep some high festival: indeed, as they conversed together, I could almost imagine that I followed the current of their stories, attending as I did to their voices as they changed from grave to gay. Among them rose a flowering laurel—shapely as Daphne herself. It was a tree, not a shrub; a daughter of the forest, slender and stately, with glassy leaves brilliant

as the ripples of those streams, and boughs that could not ward off the strong Phœbean shafts. Round this laurel the streams raced, and round many a juniper and feathery tamarisk, and by many a bank white with narcissi. All round the wood the mountains extended their arms ; and the sea, heard faintly from the distance, curved inwards as though to meet it. If I could have built a temple by a wish, it would have been in this open space.

With so much to detain me by the way, it was not till evening that I rejoined my boat's crew on the shore. I soon found that had I returned earlier, it would have profited me nothing. The sound of the sea which I had heard from afar was an omen of commotion, though at that time there was little wind. Before I had gained the beach, the gale had broken loose, and nothing could induce the sailors to weigh anchor. The Greeks are expert sailors ; but their coast has too many bays, inlets, and harbours, to allow of their being bold ; and

like men who are rich in alternatives, they are deficient in resolution. Late in the evening, finding that nothing was to be done, I landed again, leaving half a dozen boatmen on board, beside two or three peasants, to whom I had promised a passage to the other side of the gulf. I paced up and down by the sea-shore for an hour, during which the crew slept in the boat. Suddenly they awoke, and cheering up with the simultaneous impulse of a choir of birds when the shower has passed, began, not to sing like those birds, but to dance with a zeal, or rather a fury, not to be described. Flinging themselves into a circle, they gesticulated with a wild impassioned grace; each man wielded his body as if it had been the thyrsus of a Bacchanal. A song rose up among them, which seemed to throw fresh fuel on the flame; and for hours the dance raged, as Homer says, "with the might of inextinguishable fire." I watched them till it was dark, and till I could see them only by the light of the torches which they had suspended in several parts of the boat.

The later it grew the higher they bounded, and the more swiftly their circles revolved. You might have fancied that Bacchus and his wood-Gods had mingled invisibly with the crew, and amused themselves from time to time by lifting the living wheel, and spinning it around. As they descended again on the deck after each bound, the little boat plunged beneath them, sending a ripple in among the reeds, and dashing with spray the sea-pink with which the margin was braided.

That spray ere long began to glitter with a pale blue radiance ; for the moon, which had long since sent two broad, diverging beams aloft into the sky, swam up at last with a wide and perfect circle above the black, eastern steeps of Parnassus, and, gliding on from cloud to cloud, cast a fitful illumination upon the snows that covered its western terraces. This apparition only called up a louder song ; and it is singular enough, that though the revellers danced together with perfect regularity, there was hardly any attempt at time or measure

in their chaunt. Every man exercised his private judgment on this subject, and the music consequently was edifying, rather from its independence than from its harmony. Notwithstanding this defect the dance was not more remarkable for its fierceness than for its grace, and the beauty dashed across its tempestuous movements, like that of forest branches waving in a storm. After the rising of the moon the people on the shore, resolving not to be outdone, assembled also, and amused themselves with game after game. One of their sports I remember thinking a dangerous precedent in revolutionary times. A number of men ranged themselves in a ring, while another set clambered up, and stood on their shoulders. Matters being thus prepared, the ring below began to spin round on its own axis with a gradually increasing velocity; the exalted personages above maintaining their footing as long as they could, but being, of course, one by one, tossed from their uneasy pedestals ere long. The dethroned powers then

took their places beneath, those who had previously supported them mounting their shoulders, on the principle that "turn about is fair play." Such a social amusement must be as dangerous a thing as that great Revolutionist, the French Shrug ; and if I were a constitutional king, endeavouring to administer free institutions, (under which people never can take a joke, and often insist upon making inferences,) I would discourage it to the utmost of my power. The dance ended as suddenly as it had begun ; and in a few minutes the people on the shore had dispersed, and those in the boat were asleep.

For another hour I continued to pace up and down along the beach, watching the clouds which raced and huddled across the sky, and that gleaming haven as still as glass, though the tempest raged around the rocks that enclosed it. At last I lay down, my head resting against a tree large enough to shelter me from such gusts as found entrance there. I endeavoured to sleep, but could not, for the memory of an

eventful day pressed upon me ; and many a scene, which at the moment I had hardly noted, passed before my eyes. Such a day is fruitful of thoughts also as well as of images. When one visits a scene richly stored with human interests, the imagination opens itself out first to all the impressions that haunt it ; but the understanding comes forward in turn with its inquest, and asks, " But how did it all happen ? How might it, under the like circumstances, come about again ? " In the case of Delphi and the oracle such questions are not easily answered. It is not difficult to understand how such scenery as that of the mountains in whose bosom Delphi is enshrined, shook the Greek imagination out of its accustomed Epicureanism, winged it for a higher flight, and in place of gay legends and palpable shapes, peopled the spangled lawns, and shadowy recesses, and glory-smitten rocks, with the visions of a more spiritual worship. But it is not so easy to determine what it was which preserved for the oracle its credit from age to age. Neither that keen

insight which belonged to the Greek intelligence, nor those traditionary records of early religion which imparted so much of philosophic truth to the Greek mythology, could have extended any aid to the Pythoness when consulted concerning simple matters of fact. Are we then to account for the oracles by imputing them merely to priestcraft, or after the fashion of those in early Christian times, who attributed them to inspiration, but to the inspiration of Evil Spirits? The latter supposition, I confess, seems to me unwarranted, because it is needless. "*Nec Diabolus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus.*" The Evil Spirit, and great Enemy of the human race, has shrines enough in human hearts without our allotting him one at Delphi; and human credulity seems sufficient to account for the belief so long reposed in a response which had always an even chance of turning out true, and which, taking into account the degree in which the event is determined by our expectations, had commonly many chances in its favour.

Coleridge, discussing the authenticity of ghost-



stories and apparitions, opposes them by a very singular argument. It is to this effect. We cannot have sufficient cause to believe in the truth of an apparition, if the man who asserts that he has seen it is himself not certain about it. Now that his belief is a matter of imaginative persuasion, not of intellectual or practical certainty, may be inferred from the fact that, while many persons have lost their senses from terror, when a ghost trick has been played off at their expense, no one has ever gone mad from the sight of an apparition not thus presented to him. What the imagination conjures up, the imagination can deal with, half-believing it, and, at the same time, not thoroughly convinced of its reality, though, perhaps, not conscious of a doubt. If, on the other hand, it is not the imagination of the beholder, but the intervention of another person, which has raised up the supposed apparition, the belief with which it is beheld, though ill-founded, is yet a *bona fide* belief, and, such being the case, a visitation from the world of spirits is something too dreadful

to be borne. An argument in some measure analogous may be adduced against the inspiration of oracles, to whatever source that inspiration be attributed. Why should we believe in them, if they neither thoroughly believed in themselves, nor were thoroughly believed in by those who consulted them? Now, that they had not full confidence in their own answers, may be inferred from the fact that those answers were so often susceptible of a double interpretation. There is good reason to think, also, that those who appealed to the oracles had not a perfect faith in them, although, as in the mood in which men witness a dramatic representation, they may not have consciously disbelieved. Their latent incredulity may be inferred from the circumstance that, if the oracular response threatened them with some dreadful calamity, they always, instead of submitting to their fate as inevitable, endeavoured to escape it. It is thus that enthusiasts who assert that the end of the world is to take place within a few years, buy, sell, and carry on their ordinary transactions not-

withstanding, much like other people ; the fact being, not that they believe what they assert, but that they think that they believe it. If then, even in the time of oracles, belief in oracular inspiration was less a reality than it seemed, there is little reason why we should entertain it now, and impute them to a diabolical agency.

We know, moreover, that, without the interposition of spiritual Powers, there existed physical influences in connexion with the Delphic oracle quite sufficient, if backed by imagination and credulity, to produce important effects. The vapours which ascended at the Delphic cleft affected not only human beings, but the animal creation ; so much so, that shepherds were first led to the spot by observing that the goats who approached it were filled with a strange delirium. Such transports may not unnaturally be supposed to have had the effect of electrifying the energies, and sharpening the penetration, of the Pythoness. There are, unquestionably, peculiar states of body, such as the phenomena of Mesmerism exhibit, in which, to say the

least, our ordinary faculties are much extended and refined. In such cases the patient, who has a morbid desire of exercising to the utmost his special privileges, and who, far from being a mere impostor, has probably an exaggerated confidence in his gifts, sees more than his neighbours could see, but yet does not scruple to make up for any deficiency in his powers by deception. To imposture he may, indeed, resort, without a distinct purpose to that effect, considering the unnatural state, especially as regards his consciousness, into which he has been thrown; and he will be greatly aided in carrying out the deception, through the desire secretly felt by spectators to witness a marvel. The Pythoness, possessed, as she undoubtedly was, by a peculiar afflatus, may thus also, with respect to circumstances with which she was imperfectly acquainted, at once have exercised an insight not usually hers, and, at the same time, have backed that insight by equivocal answers, and by trickery of other sorts. In this she was, probably, assisted by the ministering priests,

who, notwithstanding, may have sincerely believed in her supernatural powers. Without more of conscious bad faith, she would be aided by the enquirers themselves :—finally, she would be assisted by the fortunes of men, which culminate or decline with their hopes and fears; and of her failures the world would hear little, while ample credit was given to her for chance coincidences.

If there be truth in this view of the matter, the oracular response was indebted for its credit neither to supernatural inspiration, nor mainly to priestcraft, but to that species of mental illumination which latently exists in our nature, and to that imaginative credence, distinct alike from conviction and from conscious scepticism, which has its root in the human heart, and finds innumerable means of confirming its impressions. Alloyed the oracle must have been by baser influences, like the other parts of a religion which, not founded on the strength of truth, was frequently reduced to throw itself on the strength of falsehood. It does not, however, follow that

its influence did not on the whole tend to good, as the belief in apparitions has probably done. The seat of its power was chiefly in the imagination ; and that Faculty, passing to and fro through man's whole being, and interpreting between its different portions, rests in the main on the Moral Sense, and is, therefore, an avenger of evil, and an inciter to all good works.

## CHAPTER III.

### VOYAGE FROM DELPHI TO PATRAS.

Continuance of the Storm—Ineffectual Attempt to put to Sea—Parnassian Harbour—Another vain Attempt at Navigation—Coast Scenery of Parnassus—Sunsets during a Week of Storm—Arrival at Lepanto—A Calm—Reflections on Greece—The Advantages derived from its Small Size—Proximity of its Rival States—Benefits from Compression—Variety of Greek Institutions—Character of the Greek Confederation—Benefits resulting from the Independence of its several States—Advantages which the Republican Principle derived from the small size of the Greek States—The Athenian Government no Democracy—Arrival at Patras—Departure of the Austrian Steamer—Return to Corfu.

AT a very early hour the next morning I woke, (those who sleep on as rough a bed are likely to wake early,) and insisted upon casting loose and trying what we could do at sea. We effected but little; the gale was still violent, beside being right in our teeth; and after beating about for some time, and watching a stormy sunrise as it broke through the driving mist and reddened foam, we were obliged to let go our sheets, run before the wind, and take refuge in another bay on the indented coast,

within a few miles of Salona. Again we fastened the boat to a rock, and I made a solitary expedition among the mountains, notwithstanding the assurances of my boatmen that if I fell in with robbers they would cut off my nose and ears by way of a practical joke. I should not have quarrelled with an adventure less lasting in its consequences, and might not indeed have objected to losing the very small amount of money which I carried in my pocket, on condition of making acquaintance with some tolerably interesting specimens of the banditti kind. I neither met, however, nor expected an adventure of any sort, but enjoyed instead a succession of views as noble as rocks, mountains, and waves, in their wildest combinations can compose. The sea rendered it impossible that I should lose my way ; and indeed, I could generally discern the bay in which our little boat lay rocking. I was, therefore, able to wander far about those plains which, grassy and flat, wound in among the roots of the precipitous mountains. Wearied



enough to sleep well, I returned at evening to my faithful boatmen, who made as many demonstrations of joy on my rejoining them as if we had been friends all our lives, and, lying down on the shingles in the bottom of the boat, slept till the morning.

The next day the storm was more violent than ever, and for several hours my boatmen declined any experiment of the sea beyond the rocks which gave us shelter. With philosophical good humour, and an indifference to delay which would seem almost miraculous in the western world, where leisure is a thing seldom known, and where men have lost the power of making idleness amusing or instructive, they roamed up and down the shore picking up shells. At first I did not understand what had thus inspired them with a sudden interest in conchology; but I soon discovered that the shells contained fishes, and that my crew were collecting their breakfast. They offered me a share of their spoils; but their repast was as uninviting as if it had consisted of snails, which

their fishes much resembled ; and I preferred my own fare. Although, however, we had abundance of tea, there was neither a tea-pot to be found nor a kettle to boil water in. I was a little disconcerted at the prospect of being obliged to live, no one could guess how long, upon shell-fish. My ingenious servant, however, came to my aid, and his quick wits set everything right before long. After a short search he discovered in the boat a small cup of iron. He found also some dry branches, with which he kindled a fire on the stones in the bottom of the boat. Filling the cup with water, flinging a handful of tea into it, and then placing it on the fire, I soon had a cup of tea, which was not much the worse for being drunk out of the vessel in which it had been boiled. The discovery was a useful one, as for several days I had no other food.

Favoured by a lull in the course of the day, we put to sea once more : but the storm had ceased for an hour only to take breath and renew its energies ; and we soon found it impossible

not only to make way toward Patras, but even to run across to the opposite side of the gulf, where we might have procured horses. Now, for the first time, I began to suspect I might miss the Austrian steamer, which calls at Patras once a fortnight. To provide against accidents I had allowed five days for a voyage which is often made in twelve hours; but several of those days had already passed away. Notwithstanding, I had seen enough of Austrian steamers to place a very firm reliance on their unpunctuality, and soon consoled myself by the assurance that even if I were a day late in arriving at Patras, the steam-boat was certain to be later still. I carried Delphi still in my heart, and had no objection to a few more rambles among the mountains in its vicinity. This was, ere long, a matter as to which we had no choice. Far off in the west the waters suddenly assumed that blackness more than "wine-black," which always makes a Greek sailor think it high time to run for the nearest harbour. The cloud descended over what, amid a lurid sky, had

seemed the luminous portal of the storm. Once again we got the boat before the wind, and in good time ; for within a few minutes the gale swooped upon its prey, and rushed past us, raking the dark waters into foam. We had lost, within a quarter of an hour, what it had taken us ten times as long to gain, and racing along merrily, though against our will, soon found ourselves anchored in a narrow creek. My servant, who always assumed, though very unwarrantably, that I was much incensed at these disappointments, made his usual apologies for the weather of his country : “ Such a thing,” he assured me, hardly ever happened,—“ never, except by accident ; and never should occur again as long as he was in my service. We should take excellent horses at the other side of the gulf next morning,—that is, if we could run across in the night.”

I passed another afternoon wandering about the green shores buffeted by wind and wave, or climbing the rocks, in whose caves the surge murmured with that subterranean thunder

of all music the deepest and the grandest, or listening in the hollow of the creek to a softer sound—

“That lightest murmur of its seething foam,  
Like armies whispering where great echoes be.” \*

Sometimes I walked out upon a series of dark, flat ledges which stretched far into the sea, like the substructions of a mountain swept away. Over its remote western ridge the waves sent a bowery spray, which, rising at regular intervals, until it veiled the sinking sun and yellow west, descended again without noise, or a noise unheard in the distance. All around, amid these ledges, were countless sea-wells, the smaller of them just large enough for a bath, the larger extending into little lakes, but all of them so calm, that the long weeds hardly waved within their green pellucid depths, into which you might have fancied that you need but dip an arm in order to pick up a shell, though it would have required an expert diver to reach their bottom. The contrast between the elemental

\* Sonnets by Charles Tennyson.

agitation all around the reef, and the serenity of those glassy cloisters within it, exercised a deep fascination. I could have been well consoled for the various delays unexpectedly thrown in my way if cheered only by the sunsets which glorified successively the storm of that week. Through windy gaps in the skies they tinged the sea-foam and the snowy ranges beyond the gulf, with sanguine streaks, bathing at the same time in gold the dewy thickets and green fields on the shore, and shooting a crimson beam from rock to rock and from cloud to cloud, along the confused and ragged limits of the mountain coast. Long after the fiery orb had sunk, and the ferment had waned from the western waters, the summits of the mountains suffered no other change than that from crimson to rose-colour, and again to lilac. The clouds in the highest region hung suspended and almost motionless, though drawn out into a feathery softness, and filled with radiance, as if their golden fleeces had drunk up the last light of day ; while beneath them, the lower vapours

now are. It was not till I had sailed for a few miles from Lutrarki, and observed the greater clearness with which the Parnassian ranges came out, that I realised the fact that Corinth and Delphi, two cities morally as opposed to each other as Washington and Mecca, were yet physically so close that the laughter of the midnight revellers might almost have met the hymns of the priests midway on the waters. What, again, could be more different than the character of Boeotia, sacerdotal, traditionary, unchanging, the Hellenic Austria, and that of the inventive and mercurial Attica? And yet from the same ridge of Parnes the shepherd descried the capitals of both. How remote from each other in character were Sparta, in which the whole life of man was one perpetual military discipline, and Athens, in which every one went on his own business after his own fashion. Yet the mariner ran across, in perhaps a day's sail, from the one territory to the other, passing on his way communities equally unlike both. How contrasted


were the various States of the Peloponnesus, for century after century at war; and yet from the summits of Mænalus, the wandering rhapsodist, placed immediately above Pallantium, the city of Pallas and Evander, and the Mother of Rome herself, beheld them all, or nearly all—the maritime cities of the Achaian league—the sacred plain of Elis, in which Greece celebrated its heroic games—pastoral and musical Arcadia, the Tyrol of Greece—the valleys dear to liberty of the much-suffering Messenians, its Switzerland—the walled territory and unwalled city of Sparta—Epidaurus, the sanctuary of the sick—Argolis, the most venerable of all in its associations, and its monuments, on which the Greek looked as we look on our Roman or Druidical remains. If, crossing the gulf of Lepanto, he passed from the Parnassian to the Pindan range, and Cæta, the mountain of Hercules, he looked down, at the one side on the Thessalian valleys, on Dolopia and Phthiotis, on Doris and Phocis, and the plains of the Locrians; and, at the other, on the



valleys of Epirus, on Ætolia and Acharnania :— he might have seen Thermopylæ, the gate of Greece, and Delphi, its secret shrine : far off he might have discerned Actium and Pharsalia, on which the destinies of the Roman world were to be decided ; and more near, those quiet vales refreshed by the winding waters of the Achelous and Aous, and Arachthus, of Enipeus, and Peneus and Haliacmon, and a hundred streams besides, famous in ancient song.

We are too apt to connect the idea of greatness with that of extent. Unwieldy vastness, on the contrary, is a source of weakness, and the most enormous empires have lain inert and barren for centuries, their mind being, as it were, insufficient to wield the huge and cumbrous body through which it was languidly diffused. The same confinement which is required to give explosive force to gunpowder is equally necessary to realise the 'might of human energies, which, without such compression, commonly run to waste. Concentration is always force ; and the mere number of men

needed in order to produce the most wonderful results is inconsiderable. We can easily indeed observe various modes in which the greatness of the Grecian States was eminently promoted by the narrow limits of each. A population comparatively dense made it necessary that government should be strong; while at the same time among races so enlightened it was equally necessary that the strong government should be just and liberal. To prevent that population from becoming excessive, much of prudence, of forethought, and of self-command must have been needed in forming the ties of life, as well as much of industry in agriculture and commerce, and much of enterprise in colonisation. A moral and political education thus ever advanced side by side. Once more, races kept apart by mighty ranges of mountains necessarily became rivals; but it was their propinquity to each other which realised that rivalry, and stimulated their advancing energies from day to day. The wars between State and State, moreover, were



by no means like ordinary border warfare ;— they were humanised by a common Hellenism, and had no tendency to barbarise. Neither did they resemble civil wars ;—on the contrary, in each community, the distinct integrity of which was commonly guaranteed by its geographical situation, a close political organisation and strong social sympathies, far from suffering any disruption or distraction, were rendered yet more necessary by a common danger, and a glory in which each man had his part. It is always in conjunction with military virtues, moral energies, and political duties, that the mental and imaginative powers receive their best development. So it was in Greece ; and the rival States, like forest trees, acquired a loftier stature because they had not room to spread.

How wonderful was the variety of politics exhibited in that narrow compass ! As if Greece, in its political relations, had been intended to present an epitome of Europe, as Europe does of the World, there exists no form

of government, theocratical, monarchical, or republican, aristocratic, democratic, or military, of which her little States did not furnish examples. As if also the history of Greece had been destined to constitute a compendium of all history, these various forms of government were now allowed a gradual development, now brought into sudden antagonism, and now suffered to change into each other, or to combine their several elements in the most various proportions. Not only was Greece providentially built up into a University in which all nations were to be trained in scientific lore, and an Academy in which the Arts were to find a perpetual asylum, but it became also a theatre in which human society rehearsed all its parts, and a treasure-house in which History was to preserve its archives and store its lessons. To be familiar with the annals of Greece is to understand the philosophy of history. Compared with it the records of most other communities are but a chronicle of accidents. In it is contained essentially the inner history of each. On

that history we look down as on a map ; and it becomes intelligible to us because it lies in a narrow limit, and is illuminated by a wide and steady light. All that can take place intellectually or morally on the globe is but an expansion of the struggles that may take place in a single breast. The history of a man is the history of a race : the history of a race is the history of a world : but in proportion as the horizon is widened, our eyes are bewildered; and clouds obscure the scene. The history of human society, epitomised in that of Greece, is instructive to us because it is condensed, and because in shaking off the sophisms of prolixity and the perplexities of detail, it stands before us idealised. Greece, considered politically and morally, is like the tent in the eastern tale, which, when folded, could be carried on a man's shoulder, and, when opened, could shelter an army.

Nor were the rival States of Greece without a true bond of union, though not of political union. In confederation the great problem is commonly supposed to be that of combining

municipal independence with political unity. It is not wonderful that so delicate an experiment should seldom have been successfully made. Such, assuredly, was not the character of Hellenic unity ; for the Amphictyonic Council, whatever its pretensions may have been, had seldom the power of composing the differences of rival States and averting war. Greece was neither a “ confederate State ” nor a confederation of States. It was an associated system, or rather family of States, each of them not only municipally but politically independent, yet revolving, all of them, round the common focal points of religion and ethical sentiment. Had those States been compressed into a real political unity, they would as completely have lost their distinctive social characters as the islands of the Cyclades would have lost their various and beautiful shapes if squeezed into a single island—they would as utterly have lost their peculiar moral energies as the plates of a Voltaic battery would lose their electric power if fused into a common mass. The connecting bond

among the Greek States, which were one if considered with reference to the rest of the world, and wholly independent if considered with reference to each other, was moral and imaginative, and neither material nor political. A common race had founded that union, a common language sustained, and common recollections cemented it. The Grecian States were clustered into a single system by virtue of the common ideas that animated them, as the various countries of Europe were once constituted into a whole by that which they held in common—the Christian religion—the Roman law—and the institute of chivalry. Their centre of union was not a fixed spot, but one that changed with every change of purpose. Now it was found in the Delphic shrine, the meeting point of the disturbed ; now at Eleusis, where pilgrims from every land were initiated ; now in the plain of Elis, where all Greece contended in friendly rivalry, from the hour that the full moon, shining upon the marble roof of the Olympian Temple had proclaimed a universal truce ;—

now amid the Nemean or the Isthmian course, or in the Temple of Bacchus at Athens, when Sophocles or Æschylus struck once more the chord left vibrating by the hand of Homer, and reminded the spectators from every region that a united Hellas had once fought and triumphed on the Asian coasts.

If, in place of this moral, a material unity had been substituted, and Greece had been but one nation, like Italy under the Romans, how completely it would have lost its peculiar greatness! Without the emulation of States, each of which ran for the prize which but one could receive at a time, and the love of glory thus produced, it is probable that its extraordinary Intellect would never have been roused. A united Greece would commonly have been safe from foreign aggression: it must, therefore, have devoted itself wholly to the arts of peace, and availing itself to the full of those singular commercial advantages which its indented coasts and its geographical position bestowed, would probably have become a larger Tyre; or like its



own least glorious city, Corinth, it would have drowned all that was noblest among its attributes in an alternation of industrialism and of luxury. Its chief divinities would have been Vulcan and Venus ; but their marriage is as far from being applauded on earth as in heaven. If, on the other hand, inflamed by its power, Greece had addicted itself to aggressive wars, it could but have founded one of those vulgar empires, of which the world has seen enough, and ended—for in such triumphs the reaction is equal to the action—in partially sharing the barbarism of the boundless tracts it had conquered. Unquestionably if a united Hellas had turned its arms in time to the West, it would have founded a western empire in its maturity, as it founded an eastern in its decline :—the spears of its invincible phalanx would have been reflected in the Danube and the Rhine, as well as in the Granicus, and the Roman legion might never have been heard of. Had the Greeks, however, built up such an empire, it would have been in place of the more glorious dominion

which it was given to them alone to found. Their imperial power also would not have been as enduring or as beneficial as that of the Romans; for they had neither the same constancy in their principles of rule, nor the same reverence for law.

The small size of the Greek States is a matter of paramount importance, though one often overlooked, when their example is cited with respect to forms of government, and in vindication of the Republican principle. It is chiefly where a large country is concerned that the principle of order needs for its support that gradation of ranks of which monarchy is the natural apex. Where the territory is so narrow and the population so small that every man is, as it were, before the eye of the public, there, on the other hand, we may expect most often to meet with that diffusion of public principle and sense of duty which are the first requisites in republics. In a large and populous nation every man has the benefit or the temptations of an incognito. In a small country, public

matters come home to the whole community, and whoever discharges public functions is obliged to walk in the light. Greece is often cited as a precedent in favour of democratic institutions. Many of the Greek republics were far enough from being democratic : let us however take the case of Athens, whose institutions were pre-eminently of a popular character. In one sense Athens was a democracy, but hardly in the modern sense. The Athenian freemen were few in comparison of those inhabitants of Attica who had no political privileges whatever. To the latter class belonged some ten thousand strangers and about four hundred thousand slaves. Among these the Athenian citizens ranged, a small and select body ; how small we may imagine when we recollect that Attica was about the size of an English county, that half of it consisted of barren mountain, and the rest of soil by no means fertile. In the enjoyment of ample leisure, (the hard work of the country being performed by their slaves,) the small minority

received the highest intellectual culture then existing, from literature, from the fine arts, from social intercourse, and from the drama. To such a height was mental refinement carried among them, that the tragedies and the orations listened to by what we call the Athenian populace, are too severe and stately wholly to please the literary classes in modern society. Athens might as justly be called an academy as a nation, and the Athenian government was as far from being a democracy as an aristocracy in the modern sense of the word. Where the territory is small, where every man is educated and redeemed from servile labour, and where external relations are such as to cause at once emulation and anxiety, there upon each citizen his country has set her seal, and he may fitly be entrusted with the charge of her safety.

About five o'clock in the evening I was suddenly roused from my reveries by a loud exclamation from my servant, who clasped his hands in dismay, and wrung them in wrath, crying out, "Santa Maria! ecco, per Bacco, il

vapour!" I turned, and saw above a green headland, which divided us from the harbour of Patras, the black standard of the Austrian steamer floating far behind her as she steamed out of port. I could hardly believe my eyes: but, on landing, I found that it was indeed the Austrian packet and no other, which (punctual for once to its time, as if from a spirit of contradiction) had left Patras just as I reached it. Not a little disconcerted was I at the accident; and, indeed, I have often asked myself since how I could have been so blinded by a traveller's superstitious devotion to his own arrangements, as to have regretted the prospect of another fortnight spent in Greece. I had not, however, much difficulty in reconciling myself to my lot, nor did I sleep the worse from having a bed to recline upon. Within a few days an English steamer called at Patras, on its way to the Ionian Islands: in it I took my passage, and waited at Corfu for the arrival of the boat bound for Ancona.

## CHAPTER IV.

### VOYAGE TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

Sail to Syra—A Strange Accident—The Lazaretto of Syra—Aspect of the City by Night—The Island of Syra—Views of the Egean—Sail to Smyrna—Accident by Sea—A Boat run over—Loss of an Anchor—Greek Sailors saved—The Bay of Smyrna—The City—Spot of St. Polycarp's Martyrdom—Views from the Hills of Smyrna—Its Burial-Grounds—Bazaar—Mosques—French and Greek Diplomacy—Plain of Troy—The Dardanelles—Sestos—The Sea of Marmora—A Turkish Woman and her Children.

HAVING given you, without interruption, an account of my rambles in Greece, I proceed to relate the incidents of my excursion to Constantinople. Shortly after my excursion to Marathon, I resolved to defer all further expeditions in Greece until the season was more advanced, and availed myself of the interval to visit Constantinople. I took my berth in a French man-of-war steamer, the "Mentor" by name, and left the Peireus with every prospect of a prosperous voyage. The ship was large, clean, and in all respects orderly; and I could not help contrast-

ing it favourably with the Austrian steamers, of which I had seen more than enough. Pride, however, will have a fall. The second day, we had passed several islands, among others Zea and Thermia, and were rapidly approaching Syra when we went down to dinner. A little before the end of our meal, the captain, to our no small astonishment, sent us word that we must make haste, as the boat was waiting to land us on the island! It was in vain that every one who had taken his place for Constantinople produced his ticket, and declared that he had no curiosity to see Syra. Nothing further could we make out than that the vessel we were in was not going to Constantinople—that the captain had taken us to Syra for our own good—that our fares to Constantinople had been accepted out of deference to general principles—that during the night we were to be lodged like princes in the Lazaretto—and that, the next morning, the vessel, which was really proceeding to Constantinople, would ~~have~~ the honour of waiting on us, and would

be but too happy to take us to the end of our voyage.

Where there is no alternative, a man's deliberations need not cost him much time. Gloomily and silently we descended the ship's side—a motley, many-coloured company—and seated ourselves in the little boat. The captain stood at the side of the ship, took off his hat, smiled, and made us a short speech, apparently very obliging, and particularly satisfactory to himself; but the splashing of the oars drowned his parting words. What they were, therefore, I know not; but, mine, if I had expressed my thoughts, would have been—"Never again will I be such a very youthful Telemachus as to cast my lot with a 'Mentor' more perfidious than Circe." Before we had done ruminating dark fancies, and chewing out the luxury of a grievance, we discovered that those who complain about trifles are not left long without real cause for complaint. Close to the shore, where our boat grated against the sand, were ranged a dozen dens (for they were not good enough to be



called hovels), built of pebbles and mud. "There live the fishermen of Syra," I remarked: "poor men, I suppose they are out just now providing our supper." "On the contrary," replied the steersman, "there you must live yourselves for a little time: but, courage! you will be as comfortable as possible: the sea never comes in." Thinking ourselves in a strange dream, we landed, and bent low enough to look into one of these kennels, in which there was neither floor nor ceiling, nor yet chair or table. There it stood—four walls—an abode in the abstract—no particular house—a place stripped of impertinences, and free from conventionalities. In consternation we recoiled, fully resolved to get on board the boat again, and insist on being received in the ship. Already, however, the sailors had pushed off at the command of their steersman, who took his cigar out of his mouth, and remarked that the lazaretto seemed faulty from what it lacked rather than from what it possessed!

Three of these dens being vacant at the time

of our arrival, I was able to select one, in which I had but two companions. They stuck a tallow candle against the earthen wall, resolved that if the fleas devoured them before morning, at least they would "perish in the light." Down they lay, contented, low-minded Greeks, without self-respect enough to consider themselves as men aggrieved, and were asleep in a few minutes. I found it less easy to reconcile myself to my lot, but hit upon an expedient not sufficiently appreciated, that of conquering vexation with fatigue. Accordingly, leaving my companions to their dreams, I sallied forth, and walked for hours up and down beside the still and gleaming sea. I have seldom seen a more picturesque spectacle than the town of Syra presented on that occasion. It is placed on a crescent-hill, which rises from the water-side, just opposite the little island on which the lazaretto stands. The whole of this crescent, and also a steep mound on its summit, is covered with houses ranged one above another, stage beyond stage, like the steps of an amphitheatre. In the

town there is not one single shutter, the consequence of which was that nearly every light was visible from our prison. The illumination was reflected in the water, and could not easily be exceeded in brilliancy. At an early hour in the morning weariness crept over me, and I retired to rest. I was awaked by the joyful acclamations of my fellow-sufferers, who had already discovered the arrival of the second French steam-boat. In a few minutes we had tumbled our luggage into a boat, each man rushing to the landing-place with a portmanteau on his shoulder, and rowed along side. At the bulwarks stood the captain and several officers, all very like each other, and all very ugly, smiling, nodding, and bowing to us, and whispering to each other. Up rose every man in our boat, which swayed about till I thought it would have upset—Greek, Turk, Jew, and Armenian, and chattered vociferously for about three minutes, each in his own language, making a confusion of tongues in which not one word was intelligible. The captain

listened with much politeness and answered, when the hubbub had subsided, "Mais, messieurs, certainement !" Distrusting so general an assent, I got up in my turn, and stated our case to him, requesting him to take us on to Constantinople. "Impossible," was his reply. We were in quarantine, and so should he be if he meddled with us. "But you are going to Constantinople, the city of the plague." "No matter," was his reply. "The ship which had brought us thus far came from Alexandria : the plague at Alexandria differed from that at Constantinople, and far exceeded it in virulence." "But we had been given tickets to Constantinople." "No matter ; it must be confessed that it was an imprudence to have given them." I made one more desperate effort in an oration full of sublimity and pathos, insisting on the law of nations, the honour of the French flag, insult to the English nation, and the rights of man ;—in the midst of which the vessel steamed off, splashing us all over with the spray from her paddles, the captain

and his officers taking off their hats, shrugging their shoulders, and lifting up their eyebrows into arches steeper than the "Bridge of sighs" or the "*Pons asinorum*." The last words which I caught were "*pauvres diables*," from the captain, and "*enfin c'est égal*" from the officer next him. Nothing remained but to row back to the lazaretto, which accordingly we did, the Greeks tossing back their heads with scornful laughter, the Armenians and Jews gesticulating with rage, while a solemn Turk who said nothing, evidently thought the more, twisting his beard in his hand, glancing after the ship with lurid eyes, and no doubt wishing for a sword!

On returning to the lazaretto, the first thing we discovered was that, during our brief absence, a hundred and fifty pilgrims, on their way to a saintly shrine in a neighbouring island, had taken possession of our dens. There we stood, a group for a painter, with our portmanteaus on our shoulders, our bags in our hands, bitter indignation swelling in our hearts, and our eyes

fixed in jealous amazement upon the strangers who had contrived to rob us of our hitherto detested homes. In reply to our enquiries and reproaches, the authorities told us that there was still one small room unoccupied at the top of the lazaretto, into which we might pack ourselves if we pleased ; on the other hand, we were equally free, if we preferred it, to squeeze ourselves into our old kennels. We cast another despairing glance at their new occupants, who were crammed so tightly together that a cat or a dog could hardly have found room among them ; nor would a cat which preserved a remnant of self-respect have made the attempt. These pilgrims were, most of them, beggars, and apparently had not been washed since the battle of Navarino, if indeed they had ever been washed in their lives. There could be little doubt that they were covered with vermin of every sort ; and in the East there are nine different kinds of bugs alone. A brief consultation was quite sufficient to determine us ; and we desired the guardians to place us where they

pleased, provided they removed us from the present company. We were marshalled accordingly to our upper chamber. Having taken possession of it, and deposited our luggage on the floor, we sallied forth again to an open court, where we passed the day, meditating on the interesting chances which befall travellers, and the knowledge of the world which they are sure to pick up on their way.

Late in the evening it grew cold, and I was obliged to take refuge within the walls of our dungeon. I found my companions already there, squatting tailor-wise, each man upon that carpet with which the eastern traveller is generally provided. All were talking at once, and each in a different language, laughing and telling stories, until my brain went round like the brain of a dancing Dervise. As it grew later, and the cold increased, each of them pulled up the four corners of his carpet and knotted them over his shoulders, nothing remaining outside the pyramid thus formed except his head and red night-cap. A strange spectacle they presented, squatting

there like so many wretches whom an Evil Genius of Africa had immersed in leathern bottles and left for a season. Every moment their volubility seemed to wax fiercer, and I had given over all hopes of sleep, feeling indeed as much stunned as if I had been hanged by the heels from the topmost story of the Tower of Babel, when all at once there came a pause ;—the imprisoned spirits wavered in their circle, lay down, or rather tumbled over, with one accord, and in another moment were snoring. There was but one exception, an Armenian merchant, who continued for more than two hours to recount a series of stories for his own amusement, accompanying them with furious gesticulations. He also, however, at last ceased,—brought to a stand-still in a moment, like a child's top when it has hit against the wall,—upset and joined the rest of the sleepers.

The next day was fortunately the last of our quarantine, and thenceforward we were to enjoy the freedom of the island. Great was our alarm, however, on descending into the court.



lest any of the more recently arrived travellers should touch us, as such an accident (a thing of frequent occurrence) would have consigned us to another imprisonment of fourteen days. So nervous did this prospect make me, that long after I was set free, I could not help, while walking about Syra, instinctively holding forth my stick between me and any one who approached very near. I had still to wait five days for the arrival of another packet. With the assistance of the English Consul I succeeded in making out the Secretary of the French packet office, and insisted on receiving a clearer explanation than I had yet been favoured with of the singular fact that although I had taken my place in a steamer bound for Constantinople, that vessel had notwithstanding proceeded to Alexandria instead, dropping me at Syra. Mr. Secretary, in reply, commenced a long harangue, dividing the subject into different heads, each of which he counted on his fingers as he proceeded. Three of these heads he had already disposed of, when, perceiving that he

had ten fingers at his command, and that the question would therefore necessarily divide itself into ten heads, I interposed, stating that he had convinced me already, and that I would give him no further trouble, except to refund the money I had paid. This demand astonished him very much, shocked him not a little, and would have pained him yet more had he not obligingly attributed it to my ignorance of the world and of business. Here, however, I was resolute; and after a tremendous discussion, during which he snatched off his spectacles and put them on again more than a dozen times, I confuted him in argument, and he repaid me my money, with the exception of the fare as far as Syra, assuring me, however, to the last, that he did so out of politeness, not out of justice, "casualties being," as he remarked, "part of the order of nature."

At Syra I found a tolerably good inn—good enough at least it proved for me, inasmuch as, spending the whole day in the open air, I was but little dependent for comfort on its accom-

modations. From morning till night I wandered about the steep and rocky hills; the whole island, I think, not containing a single plain, or even level road. Syra is too bleak and barren to be beautiful, nor is the scale sufficient to impart to its scenery a character of grandeur; it is, however, in a high degree, picturesque. It consists of many successive rough, lofty, and craggy ridges, sprinkled at wide intervals with trees, chiefly ilex and olive, and divided from each other by streams that breathe verdure over the base of the narrow glens through which they glide, and refresh the gardens with which, as well as with wooden cottages, their banks are bordered. Between these tawny ridges open out in all directions magnificent sea-views, comprehending, each of them, a cluster of the Egean isles, which lie, like so many transformed sea-nymphs, basking in the brightest of all suns, and bathing in the bluest of all waters. Among these islands are Delos, Paros, Antiparos, and the Bacchic Naxos. Delightful it would have been to have explored them, had that been

practicable ; nor was it possible without interest to gaze on them from afar—to see the sun ascending over the island that gave Latona rest, and to watch the remote sea around Naxos tinged with the grape-like purple of evening. From rock to rock I clomb, seeking ever for a better point of view from which to contemplate objects, the mere names of which are sufficient to call up fair images before the eyes. Keeping ever on the heights, I seldom passed near a human being, though I sometimes observed the islanders gazing from the glen below at the unwonted stranger. I often lost my way, and generally returned late, to the discontent of the cook, a little bright-eyed man with a paper cap on his head, an enthusiast about his art, who insisted on attending me at dinner, and pointing out in what point of view each dish was to be considered, although I did not understand a syllable he said, and answered him, perhaps too briefly, in English. The five days of expectation rolled pleasantly away ; and though I did not visit Syra by my own good will, yet I left it

with what a traveller calls regret—not, I fear, a very deep sentiment.

From Syra to Smyrna is not a very considerable distance ; and yet we contrived to meet two accidents on our way thither, the former of which turned out more formidable to others than to ourselves. It was late in the evening when we approached the coast of Asia, and light there was little or none. Most of those who had been pacing the deck all day had retired to rest—the young ladies to dream of the Bazaar at Constantinople, and the men, let us hope, of those whose unsteady steps they had lately been staying. The sea was quite still, and we rushed through it with a speed which, on a dark night, sometimes makes one think how far from desirable it would be to encounter another vessel advancing with the same velocity, but in an opposite direction. The ocean, however, is a wide road, on which there is room enough for two vessels to pass each other ; and that would be a strange coincidence which brought them to the same spot at the same moment. Such were

my thoughts, as, lying on the deck, I turned on my side to court sleep once more ; when suddenly I heard a shout from the sailors in the fore part of the vessel. In a moment I was among them ; but before I had time to see anything, I heard a loud crash, followed by a louder cry ; and saw, in a moment more, the mast and white sails of a vessel which we had run over, clinging—a lamentable spectacle—to our bows and rigging. In a few minutes we had lowered a couple of boats, in the hope of picking up the wrecked crew. All around us the sea was covered with the stores the luckless vessel had carried, consisting chiefly of lemons and oranges, as well as with oars and spars. The next ten minutes were a time of deep suspense ; but at the end of it our boats returned with three Greek sailors, all whom they had been able to find. Whether the whole of the crew had been saved, or what proportion might have been lost, we knew not ; and we clustered, with many questions and infinite confusion, around the three Greek sailors, who,

having given themselves a good shake, each, like a water-dog, stood among us the only unmoved people in the group. In reply to our questions, the sole answer we received consisted of the words, *τρεις ανθρωποις*, the penultimate syllable of the latter word being pronounced short ; while, in illustration of their meaning, each of our informants held up three fingers of his right hand. From this answer we rightly inferred that their crew had consisted of but three men, all of whom had providentially been saved.

On further inquiry, it turned out that the unfortunate vessel we had run over was a trading boat, bound from Smyrna to some other city on the coast of Asia Minor, with a cargo of figs, lemons, groceries, and spices. The wind having died away, the sailors had gone to sleep, and were awaked, for the first time, by finding themselves in the water. They immediately struck out, and swam round and round like so many frogs, taking care not to separate each other, and concluding that whoever

had upset their boat would, as a matter of course, return to "make enquiries." Not the least disconcerted did they seem by the accident ; and, apparently, they had seen enough of the world to know, like my friend the secretary of the steamboat office, "that casualties are part of the order of nature." Considering the degree of nervous agitation and distress which we, who belong to the more "civilised" part of the world, experience, on very slight occasions, such as missing a railway train, their entire self-possession and almost entire indifference were worthy of notice. They were going to lie down on the deck again, and compose themselves to sleep, when the captain insisted on their changing their clothes, lending them three cloth suits of his own, while theirs were placed near the fire to dry. This arrangement effected, our unexpected visitors went to bed, and we followed their example ; though, as accidents are said never to come alone, I had a strong impression that our slumbers would not remain unbroken.



And even so it happened. After a few hours' sleep I was awaked by a loud commotion on deck ; men rushing in every direction, and clamouring after a fashion which probably would not be tolerated on board an English man-of-war during a wreck. It was that cold dreary hour of grey dawn which precedes sunrise ; but there was light enough for me to see that, just at the entrance of the bay of Smyrna, we had got too near the shore, and that, although there were no rocks near us, there were abundance of shoals, from which it is not easy to extricate a ship that has run aground. We saved ourselves from that misfortune by flinging out an anchor just in time ; but when, on getting the vessel round, we endeavoured to raise that anchor, we found that this was no easy matter. An English ship, which lay rocking in the shadow hard by, sent off a boat to our assistance : the joint exertions, however, of our own crew and of our friends proved ineffectual ; and after losing an hour we were obliged to proceed upon our way, leaving

our new allies to continue their efforts unaided.

Soon after sunrise our whole ship's crew had appeared on deck, and among them the three Greeks, whose acquaintance we had so uncere- moniously made during the night. They had discovered on board a passenger who was able to speak both Greek and French, and with his aid, as an interpreter, they came to the captain and demanded that he should reimburse them for the property they had lost. This, at first, he stoutly refused to do, asserting that the fault had been entirely on their side ; that they had no right to have gone to sleep on the water ; that lying, as they did, right in his way, they might have done him the most serious damage, and would have done it, but for the accident of their boat being so much smaller than his ; and that, even as matters had turned out, they had occasioned him much delay, trouble, and agitation. To this harangue the Greeks listened with immoveable tranquillity, and with the countenances of men who had heard just what

they expected to hear : then, brightening up with a sudden vivacity, they enquired of him, not even waiting for an interpretation of his speech, whether a steam-boat was not bound to carry a lantern on her mast. This question, of course, he could not answer, otherwise than in the affirmative, and, accordingly, he asserted that he had carried one. The Greeks had, however, shortly after coming on board, heard an officer reprove a sailor for having neglected to light the lantern, and had guessed his meaning by his gesticulations. Thus far they were able to make their cause good, and the captain was obliged to lower his tone and to expostulate with them on their ingratitude to a man who had saved their lives ; affirming that he had spent twenty years chiefly in endeavouring to befriend the Greeks, and that he had met nothing but ingratitude in return. Our guests, however, insisted on their rights, and the captain, compelled to negotiate, told them that it would be a great scandal if friends were to quarrel about a trifle—that when he landed at Smyrna he

would send for the French Consul, refer the matter to him, and abide by his decision.

The Greeks consulted for a few moments on the subject in their own language, laughed, and said they would allow him to settle the matter in whatever way he thought just. Their acquiescence surprised me, as I expected little from the proposed arbitration. My suspicions were confirmed when I heard one officer say to another, "Just as if our Consul would decide against his nation ;" to which the other replied, "Beside, the captain will not give him the trouble of coming." "What," said I to myself, "can a Greek be outwitted by a Frenchman?" It was not till our departure from Smyrna that I was undeceived. Our astute captain had informed his shipwrecked guests that he would not have time to see the Consul till an hour before getting under way in the afternoon. They agreed after a little murmuring to return at a specified time, and landed with the rest of us, still wearing the captain's clothes, in order, as they stated, to look out for another boat. When the hour for our

departure came, however, our friends were no where to be found ; and all search for them proved as vain as a search for the old moons or the snow of last year would have been. Great was the horror of our captain as the truth dawned upon him ; great his indignation when there was no longer room for doubt. Furiously did he pace up and down the deck ; many a wrathful glance did he cast at the shore, before he admitted that the game was up, and exclaimed “ In fine they have deceived me ! wretches, ingrates ! Three suits of clothes ! my best or among my best—worth their paltry cargo thrice told,—lemons, indeed ! figs ! impostors ~~that~~ they are ; without doubt they laugh at us ! ah, Greeks, Greeks ! ” Notwithstanding, neither had the French Consul ever set his foot on deck. Truly it was diamond cut diamond between them ; but “ thrice blest Hermes ” smiled upon his sons, and glanced obliquely on the stranger.

The bay of *Saïrna* is eminently noble in character, superior, I think, to any of the Italian bays, though hardly equalling in variety and

loveliness several of the Grecian. Sailing in that bay and in its neighbourhood I was much struck by the deep green of the mountains, which contrasts strongly with the lavender-colour, predominant in Attica. The scenery around Smyrna is on a broader and grander scale than that which I had lately seen, its hills being wider though not higher, while the ample valleys between them are characterised at once by vastness and luxuriance. Beyond the city, in a direction opposite to that in which the sea lies, rises a noble amphitheatre of broad, green hills, on which the people point out a spot which, as they affirm, was the site of a church built by St. John, and another, asserted to be the place of St. Polycarp's martyrdom. Such lore is, of course, somewhat apocryphal ; but in the region where once flourished one of the Seven Churches of Asia, we are more disposed to accept such legends on insufficient evidence, than to scrutinise them closely. I visited a venerable castle built by the Genoese, which crowns the summit of one of the highest hills, and commands such

a view of sea and mountain as few spots on the earth can display. Standing on that elevated ground, I could not determine which was to be preferred, the inland prospect with its rich, wide valleys, its winding rivers, its plane-trees, and dusky cypress-groves, or the bay with its green and broad-based mountains, its beaming sea, and its multitudinous shipping. To that bay an additional interest was given by the presence of the English and French fleets which lay in a crescent on its ample plain, heaving slowly in the sunshine while at anchor, and straining their cables—a suggestive image of restrained yet expectant ambition.

The picturesque effect of Smyrna is much enhanced by its numerous and magnificent burial-places, which are sufficient in themselves to convince a reflective mind that the East by no means labours under that comparative barbarism which the self-sufficiency of the West has long attributed to it. Where the dead are remembered, there the heart and the moral sense are alive ; nor can man there be subjected

to that true barbarism which, however it may be tricked out and made specious, consists in nothing more than in a dependence on the senses and the present hour, and an alienation from all sad and solemn thoughts. The effect of those vast black forests is inexpressibly grand, and the more so because they commonly range over elevated ground, and occupy a large proportion of the landscape. Over every grave a cypress is planted ; standing, therefore, within about six feet of each other, each gathering an added darkness from its neighbour's shadow, they cloud the earth with a sombre weight of shade, and seem to turn night into day. In the cities of the dead which they consecrate nature herself is obliged to wear mourning.

The streets of Smyrna are narrow, dirty, and dark : the bazaar, on the other hand, is as brilliant and as fascinating as a cavern of jewels described in a fairy tale. It consists of a labyrinth of alleys, roofed with planks which nearly join each other, but which are yet sufficiently far apart to let in streaks of sunshine



that bar the pavement as with golden ingots, and shoot a radiance into the duskiest recesses of the gorgeous shops at each side. The dark magnificence of these shops imparts to the bazaar that peculiar richness which characterises Eastern pageantry. The goods of each, instead of being locked up in presses, or ranged along the retiring depth of the building, are all brought to the front, and exhibited there in the most tasteful combination. At one time you walk for a hundred yards through a space glowing like an autumnal orchard from the multitude of crimson and orange slippers suspended at each side, numerous enough, one might fancy, to have shod the army of Xerxes. At another you pass through alleys lined with Cashmere shawls and Persian carpets, and sumptuous as an Oriental saloon. A little further on you come to a region glittering with jewellery, perfumery, and sweetmeats. The traveller, however, who allows his eye to be too much entranced by these wonders, is likely to be rudely awakened, and may think himself

well off if he escapes being knocked down by a train of camels, pacing forward, softly and deliberately, one by one, with shaggy necks and level heads, like beasts in a state of somnambulism. The burthens which they carry are frequently wide enough to sweep the booths at each side ; so that the best chance of not being thrown down, if one cannot retreat into a shop, would seem at first to consist in stooping low enough to let them pass over one's head.

The mosques of Smyrna must much disappoint any one who has formed high expectations of them. I hardly know any religious buildings the architecture of which appears more entirely uninspired. The traveller finds no difficulty in gaining admittance on complying with the simple condition of taking off his shoes, a mark of respect which will seem to him very superfluous as soon as he has entered. The interior is a vast saloon, for the most part square, and always a rectangle, the roof of which is commonly supported on large and shapeless pillars. Buildings

more entirely destitute, not only of architectural symbolism, but of expression, it would be difficult to imagine : and bare as they are, they make that bareness yet more offensive from the paltry ornaments with which they endeavour to enliven it, those ornaments consisting chiefly in countless little lamps and ostrich eggs suspended from the ceiling. Everything, however, no matter how insipid, has yet something characteristic about it ; and the baldness of these mosques corresponds aptly enough with the flat and dreary rationalism of a religion which differs but little from the Unitarianism of the West (renouncing as it does all mysterious dogmatic Faith, all sacramental worship, and all sacerdotal ministrations) except in the strictness with which it enforces cleanliness, the zeal with which it once inspired the loyal servants of its prophet, and its retention of that polygamy so long tolerated in the East.

Further accident we encountered none on our way to the "Golden Horn." On reaching the mouth of the bay we found that the crew of

the English vessel had toiled the greater part of the day to recover our lost anchor, and that their perseverance had not been unavailing. Poor fellows! they expected a reward for their pains which they were not destined to receive. Certainly they deserved something "to drink." as they would have called it: but our captain conceived that the loss of three suits of clothes was sufficient for one day. Perhaps he may have remembered them in his will, or sent them from Constantinople a money order on our three run-away Greeks: but it is certain that he took their day's labour on that occasion as a disinterested labour of love, and that consequently we departed amid very grim looks and a scornful silence, instead of hearty cheers. We left behind the island of Scio; and ere long that of Mitylene was on our left hand. On our right lay that shore which the blind minstrel who sings for all time had doubtless often paced—catching perhaps an inspiration from the deep-woven harmonies of the sea—and on which Priam had once reigned among the

towers, and palaces, and God-built walls of "windy Ilium." Nothing remains to mark the spot which afforded a subject to what may perhaps be called, using the term in its highest sense, the one Epic poem of the world. Simois and Scamander are but feeble streams winding through the wide meadowy plain which drops with a soft descent from its mountain boundary to the waves of the sea. Were they ever more, or was it only to the magnifying influences of the imagination that we owe the wonders of that well-fought field? Let us beware how we doubt that those narrow rivulets were once abounding rivers, lest, taken possession of by the long-fingered and short-sighted demon of scepticism, we should end by doubting whether the Elders of Troy rose up from their seats when the divine beauty of Helen drew nigh, and adopt an opinion with respect to the heroes who fought around its walls as disparaging as that so frequently maintained by old Nestor.

Before many hours we had sailed past the d of Tenedos, and left on the western

horizon, the blue and misty shores of Lemnos, where Vulcan had, in the Hellenic legend, met with what my friend, who commented on the Leucadian promontory and Sappho's leap, would have called "a distressing accident." Ere long we were steering into the Dardanelles, and sailing by the shores which the memory of Hero has consecrated. That torch which the priestess of Venus held out from the tower of Sestos, if remorselessly extinguished as often as she re-lighted it—

" On that night of stormy water,  
When Love who sent forgot to save  
The young, the beautiful, the brave,  
The lonely hope of Sestos' daughter—"

has been lighted again by successive poets, and tended with a more than common fidelity during the ages which have rolled away since her brief sorrow. After being transmitted from the hands of Virgil and Ovid to those of our Marlow and Chapman, it has been once more, in our own days, lifted up and waved around by those of Leigh Hunt and Thomas Hood. In most of the

legends which have descended to us from antiquity, there is a certain indescribable charm which prevents them from ever growing old. It would not be easy to ascertain in what that charm consists ; but when we remember that those stories only have reached us which have proved able to pass through the filter of time, there is the less reason to be surprised at the fact, that a merit thus severely tested should appeal so strongly to our sympathies.

The sea of Marmora received us ere long, and it was then that we felt that we were within the precincts of the capital of the Eastern Empire. We had on board a goodly array of Orientals from all parts of the East, who were far too dignified to take any interest in the objects we passed by. One of these was an interesting being, a Turkish woman unprotected, and probably nearly as much troubled at finding herself thus separated from her wonted seclusion, and divulged to the world, as if she had been a nun. Two children were her sole companions ; and in looking after her charge, she did not

always find it easy to keep the veil muffled with its customary closeness about her pale, smooth, and beautifully-shaped face. Her dark and slow eyes stared alarmed disapprobation at the wonders of the deep; while those of her children, equally dark, and almost equally languid, rested quiescent upon whatever trifle chanced to be near them. Not a word did she speak of any European language; but she consoled herself by talking incessantly to her infant, who was so young that, if he understood her better than the rest of the ship's company, he was yet equally unable to make any clear reply. Not far from her sat two little Greek girls, apparently about ten or eleven years old. After casting many a dubious glance toward her, they rose at last, with a common impulse, went to her, and notwithstanding their ignorance of her language, and their detestation of her race and religion, insisted upon taking possession of her eldest child, whom they carried about, without opposition on his part, for the rest of the voyage. The poor mother, "silent as a woman fearing blame,"



resisted stoutly at first, and looked after them uneasily for a long time afterwards ; but apparently she reconciled herself to the abduction at last, perceiving perhaps that her child was in safe hands, and remembering, at all events, that nothing could happen to him which had not been decreed from the hour of his birth, nay, from the creation of the world,—two important epochs, no doubt, in her chronology. As for the Greek girls, wherever one went the other went, and whatever one looked at the other looked at also ; so that one might have fancied they had but one soul between them, if it had not been for the art with which they alternately supplanted each other in the possession of their captive, whom they carried about with them, up stairs and down stairs, in and out, and all over the ship. Wherever they went, the young Turk went also. They were as inseparably connected as a divinity and his attribute in a mythological print.

## CHAPTER V.

### CONSTANTINOPLE.

First Appearance of the City as seen from the Water—Intermingling of Architectural and Natural Beauty—Brilliant Colouring of the Scene—Contrast between Constantinople and Venice—Also between Constantinople and the Ancient Cities of Greece—Vast Size of Constantinople and its Suburbs—A Traveller's Disappointment on Landing—Interior of Constantinople—Its Narrow Streets—The Character of Nations illustrated by the Aspect of their Capitals—Prominent Characteristics of Constantinople—Mosques—Baths—Tombs—Tomb of the Sultan Solyman.

I HAD been occupied for some time in the cabin, when a fellow-traveller entered and announced that we were sailing past Constantinople. I hastened at once to the deck, and could hardly at first determine whether what I beheld were indeed a city, or a vision of the imagination. The view of Constantinople from the sea is the most splendid of all the pageants presented to human eye by the metropolitan cities of the earth. The vulgar detail of street and alley is hidden from sight, and you are greeted, instead, by an innumerable company of mosques

minarets, palaces, dome-surmounted baths, and royal tombs, the snowy brilliancy or splendid colouring of which is, in some degree, mitigated by the garden trees that cluster around them, and the cypress forests which skirt the hills, and, here and there, descend into the city. That city is built upon a series of hills; and so intensely is a fair prospect prized by a Turk, that, on every commanding spot, the house of some rich man is placed, with its gilded lattices gleaming through a leafy screen. So large and numerous are the gardens, that the effect is less that of trees scattered amid a city, than of a city built in a forest but partially cleared. This green veil, however, softens rather than obscures the apparition that lurks behind, the vast and countless white domes shining broadly and placidly through it, while the gilded tops of the minarets glitter on high like the flames that hover above the reed-like tapers in Italian cathedrals. Multitudes of houses in Constantinople are painted green, red, or blue—a circumstance that added to the gorgeousness of the

spectacle which met my eye, as well as the fact that spring had already breathed upon the plane-trees and the almonds, which were putting forth abundantly their fresh green leaves, and their blossoms pure as the foam of the sea.

It is, however, the sea which gives its peculiar character to Constantinople as to Venice: In Venice the sea is crowned by the sea-born city, and spreads all around it, as round an island thick-set with palaces and towers. In Constantinople the effect is the opposite. At the point whence Stamboul (the ancient Byzantium), Pera, and Scutari diverge, the sea of Marmora, the Bosphorus, and the wide and winding harbour of the "Golden Horn" meet, forming, as it were, a great lake, round which, as round a central plain, the three-fold city extends, rising, stage above stage, along the slopes of the hills. The effect of this unrivalled position is, that nearly every building of importance is brought at once before the eye, minaret and dome lifting themselves up one above another. In this

respect the contrast is most remarkable between Constantinople and those capitals of the north in which you never see the city itself, but only the street or the square you stand in at the moment, in which public buildings lose almost all their effect from not grouping together, and in which you have no extended effects of colour, or of light and shade.

Equally opposed in character is Constantinople to the ancient capitals of Greece, each of which, with the exception of Delphi and a few other unwarlike cities, was built round some steep and rocky Acropolis from which its citadel looked proudly down. Constantinople has no such Acropolitan centre. If a centre for it were sought, it might, perhaps, best be found in a spot which adds much to the picturesque effect of the scene, though nothing to its dignity—the “Prince’s Island,” a rock nearly at the entrance of the Bosphorus, just large enough to sustain a mosque, the dome of which peers out from among its cypresses. Beside that island old Dandolo moored his galleys at the capture of

Constantinople by the Franks, July 18, 1203. The dark stream of the Bosphorus rushes past its terraced crags, glad to escape the Scythian blasts it has left behind, and mingles the waters of the Black Sea with the blue and luminous expanse of the sea of Marmora. Far, however, from looking down on the city from this spot, you look up in all directions on its glittering lines as they rise like an amphitheatre, and fling their white reflections on the deep.

To appreciate the extent of Constantinople, it is necessary to bear in mind that, for all purposes of picturesque effect, the various suburban towns which are united with it, though called by different names, yet constitute but a single city. For a length of eight miles that city rises stage above stage from the sea, bending toward the East, before it reaches the "Golden Horn," which winds through its heart for seven miles further, like a wide river, the hills at both sides being crowned with architectural monuments, interspersed with gardens. Nearly at the mouth of the "Golden

Horn" is the entrance to the Bosphorus. It is here that the three cities meet. Stamboul, to the west, projects into the sea of Marmora a walled and secluded promontory covered with the domes, and shaded with the cypress alleys of the Seraglio, just beyond which rise the roofs of St. Sophia. At the opposite, that is, the eastern, side of the "Golden Horn," is situated Pera, the district in which the Christians reside ; while at the southern side of the Bosphorus Scutari juts out, richly decked with mosque and minaret, from the sea at its base, to the cypress cemetery with which its upper slopes are darkened. Nor is this all. At each side of the Bosphorus, all the way to the Black Sea, it may be said that one continuous city extends. composed of villages, which in their gradual growth have nearly met, spreading high upon the hills in many places, and following the windings of the glens until they are lost among the forests and thickets of the inland country. From the Black Sea, in fact, to the sea of Marmora, as well as far along its shores, and

along the "Golden Horn," Constantinople and its suburbs extend, constituting altogether a city, the circuit of which (if a wall were built round it) would not be less than sixty miles, and yet every important building in which is seen from the water! There are five cities in Europe of pre-eminent beauty, regarded as architectural scenes in combination with picturesque natural effects—Constantinople, Naples, Venice, Genoa, and Edinburgh. Of these there is none that approaches Constantinople in the vastness and wonderfulness of its aspect when contemplated from the sea.

A considerable delay ensued after we had cast anchor before we were allowed to land, but if it had lasted twice as long, I should not have been tired of gazing at the prospects around me on every side. At last, however, we were allowed to descend into one of the numerous little caiques that came flocking merrily around us, and we rowed to land in the midst of countless sea-birds, which flew past us, only one degree lighter and swifter than our boat. The



moment that we had, touched the shore, a Greek, addressing me in Italian, informed me that he was willing to place his services at my disposal as Cicerone, and that he would conduct me without delay to an excellent house, where I should find everything that a traveller can desire. Accordingly I surrendered myself and my luggage to his discretion, and bade him lead the way. For a considerable time I followed him up a steep and winding ascent ; then at last stopped to rub my eyes and ask “ What is become of the magnificent city on which I gazed just now ? ” The hero of an eastern tale suddenly deserted by the Genius or Fairy who has built up his enchanted palace, and on whose departure it melts again into the air, does not gaze around him with more dismay than the traveller who exchanges, for the first time, the view of Constantinople from the sea for the spectacle which meets his eye as he wanders through it. The streets are narrow, hilly, and dirty, besides being so rough and ill-paved that it is with difficulty that one walks along them.

The houses are commonly small, and frequently, at once tawdry and half-ruinous ; while, if you pass by the residences of the rich, you probably see no more of them than the garden wall. In these respects the streets of Constantinople bear, we may suppose, no small resemblance to the aspect presented by many an European city some centuries ago, when but little regard was paid to cleanliness, to the comforts of the poor, or to the security of those obliged to walk. Before long I found myself established in a sort of lodging-house rather than hotel, kept by an Italian, and took possession of an airy and comfortable room, though one which commanded unfortunately no view of the sea.

Accompanied by my Greek cicerone, I sallied forth without much loss of time, eager to enjoy a nearer view of a city the first sight of which had been so beautiful. He suggested that we should inspect the antiquities,—a proposal which, however, I begged to decline for the present. There can hardly be a greater mistake than that of beginning one's acquaintance with a great

city by an examination of its minuter details. This mode of proceeding, though a very common one, is surely as great a blunder as that committed by readers who allow their attention to be distracted by verbal criticism during their first perusal of a poem. The original impression which we receive of anything great, whether in nature or in art, is of the utmost importance ; and it is absolutely lost if we do not endeavour to take in, as a whole, the object which we can afterwards examine with reference to its several parts. The consequence of reversing the order of this process is, that we insensibly grow accustomed to the objects before the eye without having ever seen them collectively ; and that, by the time we have mastered their details, that freshness of impression is worn out in the absence of which the characteristic idea of the whole does not dawn upon us. There is always time enough for scrutinising details ; but the opportunity of taking in a general impression once forfeited, is not to be recovered or compensated. Accordingly, I told my guide, very much

to his apparent surprise, that I had not come to Constantinople for the sake of seeing anything in particular, and that I only required him to take me an agreeable ride through the city. Eccentricities pass for nothing on the continent if they come from an Englishman. If costly as well as unreasonable in their character, they find their place, of course, in the bill ; if not, they hardly excite a remark, the general opinion, in many places, being that all Englishmen are more or less mad, although they are also particularly respectable, honourable, disagreeable persons, who not only retain the power of managing their affairs, but have also no small faculty of making their way in the world—a faculty strengthened by their being commonly too stupid to see difficulties, and often too ignorant to know when they are defeated. My cicerone mounted his horse, telling me that we should keep a good deal on the heights, where the air is freshest, and that he was quite of my opinion with respect to antiquities and curiosities of all sorts.

The inconvenience of dirty, rough, and hilly streets is much less to a horseman than to one who trudges anxiously on, picking his steps as he best may; and the disappointment I had felt on first landing wore off by degrees. Sometimes from the summits of the citted hills, and sometimes looking between them, we commanded noble views of the sea, viewed over a confused but glorious array of towers, domes, and gardens; and whatever was mean in the separate objects, was lost in the grandeur of the whole. The houses, small and inconvenient as many of them are, possess, notwithstanding, many picturesque features, especially a broad, projecting roof, which produces a striking contrast of light and shade. The most insignificant of them have at least escaped that look of neat and pert vulgarity which characterises most of our snug suburban buildings in England. They are without pretension, and seem sufficient to afford shelter during a shower, and during the night, to a people who, severe as is often the winter, might live during many months of the year in the open air. The

greater number of them are built of wood ; and during a long succession of years it was accounted a sort of impiety to use stone in constructing a private house ; so solid a material being thought appropriate only for religious edifices. One effect of the modest scale of the ordinary dwelling-houses is, that at Constantinople the public buildings show to greater proportionate advantage than in any other European capital, lifting up their heads over multitudes of picturesque roofs huddled together in strange combinations.

The houses of the rich at Constantinople are sumptuous in their internal arrangements ; but externally they affect nothing either of grandeur or of permanence. Half-screened by their lofty garden walls and by the trees that embower them, they might almost escape attention ; and no doubt to escape attention is no small recommendation in a country where to exhibit wealth is to tempt rapacity. The external aspect of Constantinople is thus a necessary result of its social condition, and of the

Ottoman institutions. The character of every nation indeed is singularly illustrated by the outward appearance of its metropolis, the most marked features of which constitute, as it were, so many phrenological developments, not difficult of interpretation if scanned by an observant eye. What are the most marked characteristics of Rome ? Churches, Obelisks, Galleries of Art, and (among ruins) the Coliseum, the Arches of Triumph, and the pillars on which once stood the Imperial statues now supplanted by those of the Apostles. In these buildings the triple character of the Papal metropolis, sacerdotal, artistic, and imperial, stands forth exhibited in outward types ; and in observing the monuments of Rome you become insensibly initiated into its history, and the structure of its society. In the other cities of Italy the palaces of the nobility, sometimes vast and gloomy, sometimes enriched with all the adornments of art, but almost invariably built of solid marble, remind you of that great hereditary aristocracy which inherited rule, or of those

merchant princes, the founders of families which during centuries contended for sway. In Paris neither the palaces of the once-worshipped Monarchy, nor yet those military hospitals and trophies of conquest which embody the martial spirit of a nation devoted to fame, can prevent the eye of the stranger, or of the native, from wandering to those glittering temples of gaiety and sensual pleasure, the innumerable and magnificent cafés and restaurants, with their marble pillars, their mirrored walls, and their vaulted roofs of blue and gold. London, in its wilderness of brick, is a world rather than a city. A few considerable and solid buildings, lost however in the plebeian mass, represent scientific institutions, flourishing trades, or political associations ; and two edifices rising high above the rest, St. Paul's and the Parliament House, impersonate Church and State. But the city at large, with its convenient straight streets, its houses of equal height, and one monotonous colour, its smoky atmosphere, its plain proprieties, its parks and



squares, and neat churches, exhibits the outward features of a nation devoted to commerce, to freedom, to the activities of life, to peaceful progress, to modern traditions as the guard of undefined rights, and to ancient usages, so far as these are able, without limiting private liberty, to impart to quiet respectability a harmless and interesting tinge of the venerable.

The outward aspect of Constantinople is equally true to its character and history. Where no hereditary greatness was suffered to exist, except in the royal line, no architectural monuments of great families remain. No one has built for posterity, because no one could trust to the future. The rich have spent their wealth on luxurious carpets and rich divans, not on marble halls, because they knew that before the latter had been completed the bow-string might be their portion. At one moment a man is a slave, and the next he is a Grand Vizier : again the wheel of fortune goes round, and he is an exile. Under these circumstances men snatch at the enjoyment of the moment ; but

they think little of the past, and build little on the future. If they have enterprise, and if the oppression under which they suffer be the tyranny of caprice and individual rapacity (which each man hopes to escape), not the inevitable tyranny of rapacious laws, individuals will still accumulate wealth, but they will bequeath no monuments.

In all respects the external features of Constantinople are characteristic of an empire founded on a Faith, and of a people gravely devoted to pleasure, and yet addicted also to meditation, and blindly submissive to fate. The three ideas which they express are, Religion, Enjoyment, and Death. The first is represented by the mosques and minarets, which tower above everything else ; the second by the ample baths and beautiful fountains, with their projecting roofs, Moorish panel-works, and gilded lattices, within which the element which, in Greece and Italy, was ever taught to fling up its radiance into the sun, is jealously guarded, like a beauty of the Seraglio. The idea of death confronts

you wherever you move through this paradise of the senses, not only in the cemeteries which swathe the sides of the hills with darkness, but in many a lofty and dome-surmounted tomb, in which a Sultan, still regarded as the father of his people, receives in death the filial veneration of his subjects. The royal tombs thus scattered throughout the city, and intrusted, as it were, to the reverence of all who look up to the Commander of the Faithful, produce an incomparably more impressive effect than could possibly result from a single royal cemetery, or a funeral chapel in connection with one of the palaces.

The first of these tombs which I saw took me by surprise. Not knowing what it was, I inquired of my guide concerning its destination. "Go near to it," he said, "and you will discover." It was a hexagonal building of white marble, surrounded by a projecting arcade of pillars, surmounted by a dome, its base partially wreathed by white lilies, which forced their way up through its foundations, and shaded by a

rifted plane-tree which flung the shadow of its waving branches on the walls and golden lattices. Approaching the latter, and looking through them, I beheld beneath a vaulted and gilded roof, and, resting on a rich carpet, a coffin placed on a stately bier, slanting upward toward the head, and supporting, at the upper end, a white turban and a plume of sable feathers. At each side were ranged other coffins, smaller, but of various sizes, and without turbans or plumes, on which a few beams, struggling through the narrow and arched windows immediately under the roof, and half lost in the thick walls, fell with a feeble lustre. A circle of lamps were suspended above them, and in front of the coffins stood five or six lofty tapers, about twelve feet high, on golden pedestals. Within, all was stilness and voluptuous gloom : without, the softness of the air and brightness of the sunshine derived an additional charm from the cooing of the doves in the plane-tree and on the roof of the building. "It is the Sultan Solyman," said my guide. "In the large coffin beside him lies

Roxalana, his wife. The small coffins contain some of his children, whom he put to death.” “And why did he put them to death?” I asked. “Oh, he thought they might become dangerous,” was the reply. There they repose together, the parent and the murdered children, in peaceful reunion. Probably those children thought there was as little to be surprised at in their fate as my cicerone did. A belief in fatalism reconciles men to all things. A real belief in Providence would do as much to tranquillise, without interfering with freedom of action.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONSTANTINOPLE.

General Aspect of the City and its Inhabitants—Veiled Women—Carriages Drawn by Oxen—The Bazaar—Its Armoury—Method of Dealing—The Seraglio—Palace of Beshik-Tash—The Sultan—An Attempt to withstand the Reforms—An Imposture Detected—Effect of the Sultan Mahmoud's Reforms—Hills above Constantinople—Views of the City from the Heights—Character of Constantinople—A Conflagration.

THE bearing of the people as you pass them in the streets at Constantinople is in strange harmony with the city, and must have been yet more striking before the late Sultan had commenced his unfortunate and ill-advised reform of costume. The women, who glide past you, beside fountain and garden-wall, in their long white robes and veils, which allow no part of the face to appear but the dark and mournful eyes, might be almost taken for ghosts revisiting the scenes of past delights. Not less singular is the effect when those of a higher rank and more splendid attire drive slowly by in a

carriage, at least as like a hearse as a Venetian gondola is like a coffin, consisting, as it does, of a shallow open body, richly gilded, without springs, and mantled by a canopy, sometimes of black cloth, and sometimes of a less gloomy colour. The slow and heavy oxen, that commonly draw these carriages, do not differ more from the agile horses of Attica than do the Turks from the Athenians, a contrast by which I was, no doubt, the more impressed on account of my recent residence at Athens. In place of the merry laugh, the flashing eye, and the elastic gait, there was in each Turk whom I met an expression of melancholy self-possession, which could hardly have been more pronounced had he been invariably under the influence of opium. In place of billiards or dice, or any active game, the everlasting pipe, long or short, crooked or straight, was the resource of those who had no other occupation, and of many who had. Buying and selling, bargaining and conversing, seemed to be carried on in a state of somnambulism. Pleasure itself seemed a serious

thing, and conserve of roses was handed to the customer with an air of heavy sedateness. "Eat," seemed the silent address of the Mussulman, "eat, O true believer, before you die."

The bazaar of Constantinople is one of its most interesting regions, being, perhaps, only equalled in general estimation and reverence by the Sultan's Seraglio, which is not a palace merely, but a vast and important district of Stamboul. The bazaar is, in fact, the palace of the people, where, shaded from the heat, each man may roam in a world as splendid as a mine, or the gem-lit caverns existing in a child's imagination. To one who has an eye for rich and quaint pictorial effects it is, indeed, an inexhaustible storehouse. The roofs of its long and narrow alleys are supported by stone arches, sometimes connected by wooden galleries which span the dark passages below like bridges. If you take your stand upon one of these galleries and look along from arch to arch, and down upon the moving groups beneath, dressed in the costume of all nations, and seen some-



times in shadow, and sometimes by the oblique light of a slanting beam, you fancy yourself in the aisles of a cathedral without limits, albeit of one devoted exclusively to the service of the money-changers. If you descend from that aerial station you find yourself in the midst of a scene not easily to be matched for richness. As in a garden the splendour of colouring is much increased where flowers of the same species are allowed to flourish in large unbroken masses, so the gorgeous effect of the bazaar is enhanced by the circumstance that to every branch of trade a separate portion of it is allotted.

The most brilliant part of this vaulted region is perhaps the armoury, hung as it is with every species of arms, ancient and modern, for use or for display ; helmets and shields, suits battered in many a chivalrous field, glittering spears, Indian bows, blades from Damascus, scimetars from Egypt, every kind of harness in short for man or horse, embossed with gold and often with gems, enriched with arabesques, and disposed in the most fantastic patterns. In another

part of the bazaar, and for the benefit of a softer class of customers, you find yourself in a meadowy region of Cachemire shawls, numerous enough, one might imagine, to cover all the white shoulders that droop beneath ermine and diamond, in all the European capitals. In another part are suspended innumerable little mirrors enchased with pearl, and mounted with golden handles, which are among the most favourite possessions of the daughters of the East, adorning their inmost retreats, and by no means left at home when they make expeditions abroad. Still more beautiful is that part devoted to embroidery in silk and muslin, where you find brocaded stuffs stiff enough to stand, and emblazoned with flowers of every colour, and mantles as if of woven air, almost invisible from thinness, except where they are covered in golden traceries with verses from the Koran, or some Persian love poem. Other parts of the bazaar are a blaze of jewelry,—

“A dusky empire with its diadems,  
One faint eternal even-tide of gems,” \*

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\* Endymion.

radiant with every sort of precious stone, separate or enwreathed in necklaces and rosaries, or inlaid in precious cups, rich plate, housings for horses, and head-dresses for their riders.

In addition to this multitudinous array, other parts of this enclosed city of trade (the distilled essence one may imagine it of Corinth or of Tyre) are devoted to spices from all parts of the East, porcelain of every sort, fruit, preserved and dry, and that confectionery, in the preparation of which Constantinople has no Western rival. There is no conceivable elaboration of fruit and sugar, with aromatic gums, precious juices, oils and creams, which is not to be found here in the prettiest and most various shapes, and scented with the most delicate odours. The interest of the scene is much increased by the strange aspect and bearing of the vendors of all those articles, some of whom are Jews, others Turks, while others are Greeks, Armenians, or Persians. Many a keen eye is fastened on the unwary Frank the moment he is in sight,

and many a finger beckons him on into the dusky recess in which the grave merchant is seated cross-legged on his carpet, with a pipe in his mouth. You enter, are hospitably asked to be seated, and are perhaps handed a pipe. In a little time the goods are produced with a leisurely sedateness, and a price is named at least double their real value ; the merchant, if he is a Persian, assuring you that in having been directed to an honest man you prove that you were born under a fortunate star, and that he is offering you the article for half what he paid for it. You decline his proposal ; he resumes his pipe in silence and apparent indifference, and at last rolls round on you a heavy sleepy eye, and names half the price he had demanded before. Your interpreter tells you that this time the price is a fair one, accordingly you pay down the money (the said interpreter of course receiving a due proportion of it), rise up and depart.

The most important district of Constantinople is that which is occupied by the Seraglio It

includes a large part of the ancient Byzantium, covering the triangular promontory which juts out into the waves opposite to Scutari. The sea of Marmora on one side, and the "Golden Horn" on the other, bathe its ancient walls, behind which rise a multitude of domes, large and small, half veiled by the cypress-groves which embower them. During the absence of the Sultan I was permitted to visit this palace, built on the spot on which that of the Emperors of the East had stood for a thousand years, and invested with a tragic interest by many a domestic catastrophe as deplorable as those that commemorated the Houses of Laius or Atreus. Its interest is however derived from its position and its history, not its architectural pretensions. Its courts, the cloistral arcades round which are in some instances surmounted by ranges of domes, numerous enough to be picturesque, though not vast enough to possess grandeur, are large and straggling, but without beauty ; and the gardens, though gaily decorated with trellis-work, fountains and orange-trees, are

neither remarkable for their flowers, nor for that sumptuousness and pomp which we associate with our idea of Oriental gardens, and of which a fairer vision may, perhaps, be won from Tennyson's "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," than any spot in Turkey could present to the bodily eye.

In a part of the garden close to the water side, are the buildings especially occupied by the Sultan when resident in the Seraglio, the site of which has evidently been chosen for the sake of the glorious view it commands. The apartments devoted to the royal wives and favorites are ranged round a court somewhat collegiate in character. The interior of this sacred precinct has seldom been seen by an European eye ; and, indeed, till the last few years, it would have been at the risk of his life that either stranger or Turk, not belonging to the household, set his foot within the outer walls of the Seraglio. I was assured, however, that the apartments were as splendid as velvet and silk, gold and ivory, mirrors and marbles can make

them ; and readily believe that in them, as in the "Castle of Indolence,"

"Soft quilts on quilts, on carpets carpets spread,  
And couches stretch'd around in seemly band ;  
And endless pillows rise to prop the head ;  
So that each spacious room is one full swelling bed."

On such a bed the Emperors of the East reclined, till the invincible Janissaries knocked at their gates and startled their slumbers ; and on such a bed the Commanders of the Faithful no doubt will continue to recline, until the barbarians of the North command them to begone, and make way for a hardier race.

The palaces of the Sultan in the neighbourhood of Constantinople and on the banks of the Bosphorus are almost beyond counting, and in many instances abound in picturesque effect and oriental pageantry. The largest of these comparatively modern buildings is called Beshik-Tash, and has little to recommend it except its vastness. The side of it which fronts the sea is adorned with a long colonnade of white marble ; but the rest of the building is shapeless and

without expression — the consequence of its mimicking the character of western architecture. Its position, however, is sufficient to atone for all defects. Seated opposite to Scutari, and turned toward it, the view which it commands includes a long reach of the Bosphorus as well as of the Sea of Marmora, and nearly the whole city of Stamboul. Before it lies the Turkish fleet, when in harbour, so near that the sighing of the wind through the cordage can be heard in its saloons; and behind it rise its gardens, stage by stage, along the steep of a hill which preserves many a sombre group of cypress and maple, and is richly fringed with acacias and almonds. As we approached its gate, advancing through a narrow passage, we met the Sultan, who rode forth attended by his suite. He rode a white horse, was covered with a dark blue cloak, and wore a red cap. As he approached, my Greek companion knelt down, a ceremony which I did not think it necessary to imitate. From the fact of our being the only intruders, I suspect we were where we had no



business to be, or at least to be seen ; but we did not on that account suffer any molestation. The countenance of the Sultan was pale, and marked by an expression of sorrowful exhaustion. His dark melancholy eye rested on me as he passed ; but I cannot, therefore, say that he looked at me ; and if he saw me it was as he might have seen a dark streak on the wall close to which I stood. That gaze in which there is nothing of recognition, and in which no distinction is made between an animate and inanimate object appears peculiar to the East—perhaps to absolute power in the East.

An incident which occurred soon after the accession of the present Sultan, shows that in some respects, at least, he is not indisposed to follow up the strong traditions of his race. At the beginning of his reign the Ulema was resolved, if possible, to prevent the new Sultan from carrying on those reforms which had ever been so distasteful to the Turks, grating at once against their religious associations and their pride of race, and which recent events had certainly

proved not to be productive of those good results anticipated by Sultan Mahmoud. To attain this object the Muftis adopted the expedient of working on the religious fears of the youthful prince. One day as he was praying, according to his custom, at his father's tomb, he heard a voice from beneath reiterating in a stifled tone the words "I burn." The next time that he prayed there the same words assailed his ears. "I burn" was repeated again and again, and no word beside. He applied to the chief of the Imams to know what this prodigy might mean, and was informed in reply that his father, though a great man, had also been, unfortunately, a great reformer, and that as such it was but too much to be feared that he had a terrible penance to undergo in the other world. The Sultan sent his brother-in-law to pray at the same place, and afterwards several others of his household; and on each occasion the same portentous words were heard.

One day he announced his intention of going in state to his father's tomb, and was attended

thither by a splendid retinue including the chief doctors of the Mahometan Law. Again during his devotions were heard the words "I burn," and all except the Sultan trembled. Rising from his prayer-carpet he called in his guards, and commanded them to dig up the pavement and remove the tomb. It was in vain that the Muftis interposed, reprobating so great a profanation, and uttering dreadful warnings as to its consequences. The Sultan persisted. The foundations of the tomb were laid bare, and in a cavity skilfully left among them was found—not a burning Sultan, but a Dervise. The young Monarch regarded him for a time fixedly and in silence, and then said, without any further remark, or the slightest expression of anger, "You burn? We must cool you in the Bosphorus." In a few minutes more the Dervise was in a bag, and the bag, immediately after, was in the Bosphorus; while the Sultan rode back to his palace accompanied by his household and ministers, who ceased not all the way to ejaculate "Mashallah. Allah is great ;

there is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet."

Whatever we may think of the means adopted in this instance to subvert the late Sultan's reforms, the present state of Turkey cannot be said to offer any testimony in favour of them. In his endeavour to infuse a new spirit of life into an old and decrepit empire, Mahmoud attempted a task almost as hopeless as that of the pious daughters who cut the limbs of their aged parent into pieces after putting him to death, and threw them into a boiling cauldron, hoping that, with the aid of "brewed enchantments" and Medea's potent herbs, that parent would stand among them once more "a youth 'mid youthful peers." If such a transformation could have been effected in the case of the Ottoman Empire, assuredly it was not through a process which destroyed all distinctive pride of race, undermined all old associations, and deprived the Turk of that strength which had remained his merely because he still continued to believe in himself, and to believe that his

Prophet was with him. If Mahmoud could have restored among his subjects the fervour of ancient faith, he would have needed no help beside. That, however, would have been a task almost hopeless in the case of the Turks ; for their religion being essentially an aggressive one, and their mission being a mission of the sword, to stand still is to retrograde, and from the moment that the Crescent ceased to wax it necessarily waned. His endeavour, however, should at least have been to reanimate as far as he might that religious sentiment with which the whole social polity of Mahometan nations is absolutely identified ; while by a reformation of manners, and by enforcing purity in the administration of justice he prepared the way for better things. It is the demoralisation of Turkey which necessitates the downfall of the Ottoman Empire—its sensual vices, its constitutional indolence, and its administrative abuses. Such corruptions eat like a cancer into the social body, and invoke the cleansing hand of retribution. When a nation has continued

long sunk in those vices which are weaknesses also, reform is almost a hopeless attempt. It has done its part ; and another nation is called to take its place.

Instead of throwing himself on his only secure stay, and reanimating his tottering empire with the true strength of an eastern people, Mahmoud endeavoured to infuse into it a western vigour, and made the still stranger blunder of imagining that the energies of the West could be transplanted to Constantinople by mimicking its external peculiarities. Such an attempt was, of course, like all other affectations, a failure. In discarding the robe and the flowing beard the Turk divested himself of those associations in which his real strength lay, without catching any new associations with which to replace them. Still less could he thus acquire the civilisation of those whom he poorly imitated. Traditions may indeed be put off with an ancient costume ; but arts and sciences are not put on with a new one. In many cases the change thus made was physically, as well as morally,

for the worse, in consequence of the disregard of custom and of climate which it involved. The Turkish cavalry had a firmer seat in their old saddles than they have ever acquired in their new; and the turban was practically useful alike in shielding their eyes from the sun and in protecting their heads from the Russian sword. The Moslem too cannot but painfully feel that change in their outward aspect which the traveller observes and deplores. Dignity and gravity constituted the character of their port and bearing; and those attributes in a large measure disappear with the ridiculous and mongrel dress they have assumed. While they wore the turban, the robe, and the beard, they were considered the most noble in aspect of all European races. Stripped of these appendages they are sadly reduced in the dignity and grandeur of their appearance, and are as far as ever from acquiring the mincing graces of a western salon.

The second expedition which I made at Constantinople enabled me to understand its

peculiar character, and to enjoy its admirable beauty more than weeks of groping among antiquities could have done. Leaving the crowded buildings of Pera behind, I ascended to that high ground which rises above the city and the suburbs that border the Bosphorus, swelling in some places into almost mountainous steeps, and in others expanding into downs or gently undulating wolds. Few things are more exhilarating than a gallop over these mountain plains, refreshed by the sea-breeze and enlivened by prospects ever varying, and of which the open and joyous beauty is hardly to be rivalled. Here and there they are sprinkled with pointed and inscribed stones jutting up from the soil, and erected on the spot upon which an arrow had fallen, shot from the bow of some Sultan, and worthy, in the estimate of courtiers, of eternal commemoration. It is on these plains that the traveller first forgets his vexation on landing and making a more intimate acquaintance with Constantinople. I know not, indeed, whether the spectacle on which he looks down



be not even nobler than that which he contemplates from the sea. Beneath him lies the seven-hilled city, every part of which lifts up its domes and minarets, relieved in many places against the sea, of which you catch glimpses, now over the summits of the hills, and now over the depressed ground between them.

From the higher of these elevations you command at once the whole city, extending from the Scraglio point to the Seven Towers at one side, and round by Pera at the other, in conjunction with the Bosphorus, and the city of Scutari, together with the lofty hill behind it, on the eastern slopes of which its cemetery of cypress stretches for miles away. In addition to this conjoint array of Nature's work and Man's, the Sea of Marmora flashes before you in its purple and gold, crowded with the shipping of all nations, and backed by the mountains of Asia, prominent among which Bithynian Olympus lifts its snowy dome above that region which the great Council of Nice has made as memorable in the ecclesiastical world as Con-

stantinople itself is in the secular. Though at a distance of sixty miles, that mountain (such is the brilliancy of its snows and the clearness of the air) looks so near, that you might fancy that the birds which rise in a startled flock from the court of some mosque below, shooting a glare of sudden sunshine from their slanted wings, could reach it in a few minutes' flight.

It is from these heights also that you have the full benefit of a circumstance especially characteristic of Constantinople, namely, that every commanding spot being appropriated to religious or public buildings, you take no note, from a distance, of its humbler details. Its insignificant wooden houses are then seen only in picturesque combination with the groves and gardens which embower them ; and the colours which they are painted, yellow, red or black, according to the race of the inmate, are harmonised by distance, and blending with the light green of the fruit-trees, the dark green of the cypress, the purple of the sea and sky, the

dazzling white of mosque and mountain, and the occasional golden flash of the pointed minarets, compose a scene which bewilders and almost intoxicates by the splendour of its pageantry. Its peculiar effects would be utterly destroyed if it boasted stately streets and regular houses. From those heights you recognise it at once as a vast camp rather than a city, and as such you no more quarrel with its gaudy colours than you would with those of a flag. It is the great encampment of Islam on the shores of Europe. The Moslems themselves believe that in the Book of Fate a day is written, on which they will have to turn their steps once more toward the tomb of their prophet. I know not whether an obscure presentiment of this sort may not have contributed in some measure to make the inhabitants of Constantinople contented with their slight and fragile abodes. Certain, however, it is, that if all the private houses were destroyed in one of those conflagrations which perpetually devastate Constantinople, or could be folded up like tents and struck in an hour, or rose

like the flocks of sea-birds that skim the waves, and took their flight for the opposite shore, even then, the great buildings remaining, the general effect of the city would be much what it is: It would still be the encampment where the children of the prophet speak with their enemies in the gate. It would still be the Golden Gate of the ancient world, barring at will, or flinging open to the East and to the West, its two great watery portals, the Bosphorus and the Hellespont.

I was not long at Constantinople before I came in for what is of very frequent occurrence there, namely, a fire. Indeed, I believe, that as a storm is said to be always going on in some part of the sea, so a conflagration, larger or smaller, is always raging in some part of the narrow wooden streets of Stamboul. The people have few public amusements, and this is considered one of the best, if I may judge by the demeanour of the crowds whose singular bearing was to me more interesting than the spectacle I witnessed in common with them. At first I knew not

what it meant. I had observed that vast multitudes were moving, with what for a Turk is haste, toward the court of one of their mosques, and stationing themselves, as soon as they had reached it, on the steps, balustrades, and every spot whence a view was commanded. Joining their company I discovered the cause of the assembly in a whole street from which clouds of smoke were rising, and from which it was every moment expected that the flames would burst. Nothing could exceed the business-like alacrity of those who struggled for a place in the balconies, or the placid enjoyment of those who had attained one. In expectation of the event piles of carpets, pillows, and cushions had been already brought from the neighbouring houses, and placed wherever room could be found. On those comfortable seats the multitudes had established themselves, the men in one part, sedately smoking, the women in another, now looking on and now playing with their children. In a moment refreshments of all sorts were provided—sweetmeats, confec-

tionery, and sherbet, by a number of rival purveyors, who advanced with unalarmed alacrity amid the smoke and falling sparks, plainly considering the scene of destruction a sort of "benefit" got up for their especial behoof, and unceremoniously elbowing to one side the police, who rushed with pails of water on their head to the rescue of the burning houses.

In a few minutes more the flames burst out with a loud crash, mounting high into the heavens, and flinging an exciting and pleasurable heat into the face of the crowds who, without ever removing their pipes (except to drink), gazed with silent, but impassioned, interest on a scene which, to them, was no more a matter of surprise than a street-preacher would be in Edinburgh, a "Funzione" at Rome, or Punchinello at Naples. Among the calm crowd of spectators were the proprietors of the burning houses, smoking, like their neighbours, and well assured that their loss had been determined by Allah long before the Prophet was born. In one sense they were right enough.

Doubtless, it has been predestined that fires should be frequent among them, as long as their houses are built of wood ; and, indeed, I could not help thinking that they would never become rare until an Opera is established at Constantinople, or the exhibitions of "howling Dervises" become more numerous.

A Frenchman, near whom I found myself, whispered to me that the Turks were a jealous people, and that if they suspected that I was gazing with satisfaction at their calamity, they would feel anything but contentment ; for which reason he exhorted me to assume an "air bien triste." I soon discovered that he was right, warned by occasional knocks in the ribs, sufficiently emphatic to dispel any immoderate gleams of satisfaction which might appear on my face. Certainly, if I had smiled at a people who, entirely indifferent about their own loss of property, were moved only by a stranger's sharing that indifference, I might have stood excused. I soon discovered, however, that it was no laughing matter ; although, by changing

my place as soon as the portion of the crowd, in the midst of which I stood, had apparently seen enough of me, I contrived to remain a witness of this most characteristic scene.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BOSPHORUS.

Scenery of the Bosphorus—Palaces on the Bosphorus—Festal Groups on its Banks—Varieties of Female Beauty in the East—Turkish Women—Armenian Women—Character of Female Subjection—Eastern Habits of Reverence and Secrecy—Sunset on the Bosphorus—Therapia—Historic Trees—The “Giant’s Mount”—Genoese Castle—The Black Sea—The Symplegades—Scenery of the Asiatic Valleys—The “Valley of Sweet Waters”—Castles of Europe and Asia—Europe—Influence of the East on the West.

OF all the excursions which can be made in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, the most beautiful and interesting is that up the Bosphorus and to the Black Sea. Having received an invitation from our ambassador, who was resident at Therapia, I took advantage of that opportunity to make myself acquainted with those shores which few can have seen once without retracing them often in memory. Accompanied by Dr. R., an American missionary of the Episcopal Church, with whom I was fortunate enough to become acquainted, and to

whose kindness I was much indebted during my stay at Constantinople, I embarked in one of those light caiques, which glide with such exquisite grace and swiftness along the waves. Our boatmen were strong and sinewy ; and as they pulled against the current of the river-sea, our slender and shell-like boat trembled with the speed of the water that rushed under it, and bounded forward with every stroke of the oars, like a young antelope panting up a hill. The Bosphorus, in its numerous windings, is so frequently land-locked, that, while its prevailing character is that of a wide and racing river, it spreads often into a series of lakes ; each of the beauteous family having features peculiar to itself, while among them all there is yet sufficient of general resemblance to prevent the attention from being overtaken, and the sense of harmony from being lost in variety. Its different scenes are a series of exquisite variations on the same original air.

In one of these lakes the expanse is wider and sunnier than in its neighbour ; in another, the

rocks are steeper and the flowering shrubs more distinctly revealed. Here the heavy sea-birds are more clamorous as they half fly half float with expanded wings upon the pausing stream : there the water rushes in a swifter volume, and with many a darkened pool, round the marble terraces of the promontories, the fairest of which are sure to be crowned by some rich man's palace. The indented roof of these palaces casts a wavering shadow on the stream, and slightly obscures the gilded lattices, behind which (cages of imprisoned birds) the inmates of his harem are hidden. As we passed them, the breeze wafted us a fuller fragrance from their gardens, and sometimes the sound of minstrelsy, or the laugh of the captive beauties, gathered probably around some story-teller. Chained to the wall of the house, and tossing lightly on the ripple, or moored in a still canal passing under an archway into the palace, was commonly a caique, glowing with crimson and glittering with gold. I should have been glad to have seen the fair household embarking, but was not so

fortunate. Occasionally the palace belonged to an exiled Bey, or a Minister on whom the Imperial frown had fallen. In this case, through the rifted walls, still gay with paint, the wind sang a dirge long forgotten by human lips, and the loudest voice in the thickets was that of the locust.

Equally beautiful are those reaches of the Bosphorus, the scenery of which is of a less festal character, where the hills are higher, the glens narrower, and the cypresses more thickly clustered. In several places the current was so strong that our boatmen were unable to pull against it. On these occasions we landed, and a number of men coming to our assistance, the caique was dragged, with the aid of ropes, past the projecting rock. Every interruption afforded fresh opportunities of enjoying the scenes around us. In many places we passed close to a range of marble seats at the water's edge, on which, or near which, reposed gay companies of women, Turk, Greek, or Armenian, who had come forth to enjoy the sunset.

Generally the women of each nation sat apart ; but the delight with which they played with the children (a gaily dressed boy running from group to group, and being apparently received with equal favour at each) proved that whatever prejudices divided them, they had, notwithstanding, something in common ; and I dare say that if one of those children had fallen into the water, all the mothers would have been equally active in pulling him out. Whether by mischance, or but half by chance, on these occasions much more of the veiled face is revealed to the gaze or glance of the passer by, than he makes acquaintance with at Constantinople. The Turkish countenance, with its beautiful oval shape, its colourless purity and wax-like stillness, and above all its dark, tender, and dreamy eyes, has a charm about it which the more brilliant Greek lacks.

Severe charges are brought against the morals of Turkish women, and the jealousy with which they are guarded seems to corroborate them. It is, however, to be remembered, that where no

trust is reposed, no appeal is made to honour or to fidelity ; and that a wife who is but one out of several, and who is liable to be divorced, cannot, even though she be devotedly attached to her husband (a thing very possible), regard marriage as invested with that sacramental sanctity which crowns the Christian marriage vow. Her husband has probably done more to corrupt than to elevate her nature ; and that virtue, the attribute of her sex, which remains with her, has not found a defender in her lord. She has grown into maturity like a plant, not only without instruction, but without that far higher education, the result of manners, traditions, and institutions, from which the humblest classes in more favoured countries receive a moral protection and an intellectual development. Mahomet promised his followers that in Paradise their sons should be born and grow up in the space of one hour. If the Turkish women grew up as quickly they could not be more children than they are. It is likely enough that, thus deprived of the "graver

mind," which elevates the fidelity of instinct into a moral virtue, they regard every irregularity much as a child regards the robbing of an orchard ; but if we knew no more of them than their devoted affection for their children, we could not doubt but that, in however undeveloped a state, the womanly virtues have an asylum in their breasts, and that the good seed, if planted there, would flourish as in a fruitful soil.

Compared with the Turkish women, the Greeks struck me as almost vulgar in appearance, though more frequently handsome than those of Athens and the Morea, and invariably distinguished by their black and flashing eyes. This effect was produced, no doubt, in part by the contrast between the seclusion of the veiled Turks, whose faces are seen but by stealth, and the unreserve of the Greek attire, which consisted of a wide turban of gauze intermixed with flowers and tresses, and of a gaily coloured jacket and petticoat, not loose enough for dignity, nor tight enough to reveal the grace of flowing

outlines. The Armenian women are, as a race, the most lovely I have seen. Their eyes combine something of the Turkish languor with the "lamping" irradiation of the Greek. Their hair curves in waves of the glossiest black down their fair brows, and their complexion has the freshness of the rosebud's inmost leaf. Their forms are tall, and characterised at once by stateliness and a suave and gentle grace. Their movements are modest, but marked also by a soft decision. Nothing can exceed the picturesque beauty of those Armenian women, which is much increased by their oriental costume, their crimson slippers, their cloaks of brilliant green or blue, and the long white veils which stream over their drooping shoulders. They are accused of being insipid in character; the fact probably is that they are submissive, mild, and unadventurous.

In spite of the ordinary error which associates especially with Mahometanism that subjection of the female sex, which has prevailed in the East ever since the patriarchal times, the



Christian Armenians not only live in as complete a seclusion as their Turkish sisters, but are under quite as strict a thralldom. Notwithstanding, I should think it likely that they are happy in their domestic relations. The subjection of women in the East did not arise originally from any want of appreciation of that sex, though perhaps from an undue appreciation of one element which enters into its composition ; and, like every other bondage long and willingly endured, has probably been maintained in consequence of the benefits it has conferred. In the West, whenever women have most completely thrown off that subjection, which in its milder forms is as graceful as a golden chain following the inclination of an ivory neck, the erring independence of the weaker sex, thus deprived of its natural support, has not been more strongly marked than the kindred irreverence of youth for age, of the pupil for the master, and of the client for his protector. In Parisian society, at its most corrupt Period, a woman was perhaps allowed more "of her own way"

than she had ever possessed elsewhere ; but it would be as difficult to prove that such mis-named liberty proceeded from respect, as that it conduced to security, to virtue, or to happiness.

No doubt, in a perfect state of society, men and women would be more nearly on an equality, for in a more developed humanity the character of each sex would include more of those qualities which especially belong to the other. It does not follow, however, that in the attempt to leap at this conclusion women would acquire any of the nobler qualities of men, because they had discarded some of those peculiar to themselves. The experiment is a dangerous one. How long would women preserve that remnant of chivalrous devotion with which they are still regarded if they were to assume the attire of men as well as manly privileges ? It is true that the degree of liberty as well as of respect which they have long enjoyed in the West, is owing to the glory originally cast upon womanhood by Christianity, which ever exalts the weak, and ennobles, while it enforces, Obedience : but it

does not follow that the extended liberties of recent times have proceeded from the same source, or that those who would most discard the Old Testament model, are attracted in any especial degree by that of the Second Dispensation. As the subjection of women in the East has not resulted exclusively from tyranny, so their seclusion has not been the effect of jealousy only : nor do veils and lattices date from the law of the Arabian Prophet. The Asiatics have ever been averse to our western habits of publishing everything at the market cross. With them modesty is reserved ; which, indeed, it naturally is, if not accompanied by coldness. With them promiscuousness and curiosity, the unashamed boldness, and the prying inquisitiveness, are the characteristics of the despised "dog." With them secrecy is a virtue ; and the tongue that discloses all things, and the eye that is "in the ends of the earth," are counted unfaithful and unclean. The root of this part of the eastern character is to be found in that Veneration which has ever been stronger in the

East than in the West, and which has there imparted a recluse and religious character to social and domestic institutions. It is to this instinct, no doubt, as well as to the more ardent passions of the East, that we are to attribute that seclusion of women which, like most institutions, has its good as well as its evil side. The habit of reverence and secrecy was strong even among the lively and loquacious Greeks, who not only concealed their religious mysteries, but counted Reserve a virtue. Their domestic habits were not so remote from that of eastern nations as we imagine : and the Sicilian historian, Dicæarchus, a disciple of Aristotle, informs us, in his treatise on the Greek cities, that in Thebes “the eyes of the women only are seen, the rest of their faces being covered by their garments.” In Greece the spirit of Knowledge and the spirit of Reverence hung for a long time in happy balance. Among them the mind was as naked as the statues of the Sun-God, the heart as secret as his Delphic shrine.

It was late in the day when we arrived at

Therapia, and the beauty of the scene was indescribably increased at the setting of the sun, which had for some time before been hidden by the woody hills. The pine-trees, as we advanced, seemed to burn like flaming pyres, on the summit of their rocks. The white marble of the fountains was touched with a delicate pink, as the mountain snows, when a turn in the winding stream revealed them to us, were flushed with a roseate suffusion. All objects became more distinct at once and more brilliant ; the shores appeared to approach each other ; the very bud on the brakes, as we passed them, swelling out as if ready to burst, while the gilded lattices caught a brighter flame, and the gold-topped minarets shone like lamps against the cypressed slopes. The villages on every promontory exulted in the light ; and many a dusky glen, winding inward from the strait, seemed filled with a crimson mist ; an effect produced either by its luxuriant vegetation, or by some oblique ray, reflected from an orb invisible to us, which struck along its rocks

and tinged its atmosphere. The space beneath the groves looked dark as a cavern, while the foremost stems glowed with a ruddy light.

We passed the night at Therapia, a village about halfway between Constantinople and the Black Sea, seated in the most beautiful part of the Bosphorus, and for that reason much frequented by ambassadors, most of whom have residences there, as well as by the more opulent Turks and Greeks. Opposite to it the ships of many nations lie at anchor, with their respective flags streaming on the wind ; and it happens not seldom, that while tacking up and down the strait they entangle their cordage in the lattices of the houses, or run a bowsprit right into an overhanging harem—no doubt to the mingled fear and mirth of its inmates, who, however, have never, I believe, attempted an escape by extempore embarkation in reply to so unceremonious a visit. Beyond Therapia are many interesting scenes, among others, one which claims historic fame. It is a wide flat plain, surrounded by high hills, in the centre of

which stands a circle of immense plane-trees, the trunks of which rise so close to each other that they may almost be deemed to constitute but a single tree. Beneath their shade Peter the Hermit<sup>is</sup> said to have preached the Crusade; and at a later period a Christian Prince halted there a troop of horse, (I dare not state their supposed number) and bade them rest there as in a tent, during the noontide heats. At Therapia we crossed the water, paying first a visit to an English frigate that lay midway in the stream, and roamed all day long about the hills and dales of Asia. We began by climbing a steep hill, known by the name of the "Giant's Mount," which commands a view of the distant mountains, as well as of nearly all the reaches of the Bosphorus. Its broad smooth brow is garlanded by a natural chaplet of spreading oaks, intermingled with lofty elms, and a rich underwood of holly. In the midst of the circle is a green space of soft and silky grass swelling upwards like a cushion, on which we lay for a long time, resting our eyes on the dark blue

water far below, faintly descried under the bowers of holly, but darting occasionally diamond scintillations beneath the drooping lid.

Pursuing our way we came to a gaunt old ruin, a Genoese castle placed on a commanding eminence,—a skeleton memorial of ancient times, whose fleshy pride has wasted away. Our reverence for the two great maritime republics, Venice and Genoa, is greater in the East than in Italy ; for it is there that we realise the vast distance to which they pushed forth a mailed hand. That reverence, however, is far from being unalloyed. That power should degenerate into tyranny surprises no one ; but when it is associated with perfidy too, it affords no steady resting place even to the retrospective imagination. Genoa extended but small aid to the great Christian Metropolis of the East, (which, but for the disunion and apathy of the Western Powers would never have seen the Cross displaced by the Crescent) ; and on not a few occasions it contracted for a separate peace. Power which is founded exclusively on com-



merce will usually be directed mainly by a commercial estimate of the expedient and the inexpedient, and will leave behind it but few trophies of heroism and honest fame.

This castle commands, from its vantage-ground, a view of the Black Sea, on which the Greek sailor looked with such aversion, contrasting it with his sunny *Ægean*. As gloomy as its name, its expanse spread far away into the distance; and I can easily believe that it is, as it is said to be, the laboratory of all the storms that vex the more westerly regions of the Sea of *Marmora* and the *Levant*. At the extremity of it, and just opposite to the entrance of the *Bosphorus*, stand the *Cyanean Rocks*, the far-famed *Symplegades*. As I looked upon their lofty grey masses, and that rift between them, through which the *Argo* sailed, I was vividly reminded of that noble passage at the commencement of the *Medea*, in which the Nurse laments that the pine-trees had ever left their home on *Pelion's* side, or exercised in rowing the heroic arms that wafted her mistress from

the Colchian shore. On the highest part of the rock is an altar of Parian marble, by whom placed, however, Tradition keeps no record :—perhaps by a shipwrecked sailor whose gratitude, though not his name, has found a record.

On our return, in place of pursuing the windings of the Bosphorus, we followed an inland path, passing through many a hollow glen, and stopping often to admire some new combination of mountains, marked by those peculiar attributes of vastness, stilness, luxuriance, and smoothness, which characterise the scenery of Asia. To describe those scenes in detail would be impossible. To all of them belonged the same character of openness, spaciousness, serenity, almost what might be termed Magnanimity, by one who reads the features of Nature in the hopes of tracing in them “an ebbing and a flowing soul,” and who attaches a mystical interpretation to the works of Creation as well as to the word of Revelation. If the resemblance of these placid vales one to another might be charged with monotony, to me that

monotony seemed (like the monotonous music of waves upon a far-off strand) to diffuse an indescribable peace. I could have looked for the lotos in place of the arbutus ; but lotos in that region there is none.

The most beautiful of these glens is one nearly opposite to Therapia, called the "Asian Valley of Sweet Waters." This is the favourite place of resort to the rich, and is especially thronged on Friday, the Mahometan Sabbath. Hither flock all the Beauties of Constantinople for their holiday revel ; not only the wives of Beys, Emirs, and Pashas, but the Sultanas themselves. Over the short grass their carriages, glittering with gold and shaded by velvet and silken awnings, are slowly and noiselessly drawn by white oxen, and occasionally by horses ; while the dark, impassioned eye gleams upon the passer-by between the breeze-stirred veil, and the pillow of crimson satin on which the pallid cheek reposes. Through the plain wanders a pellucid stream which falls into the Bosphorus, and on the banks of which tower up stately groves of

plane-trees, from twenty to thirty feet in circumference, and disposed often with a regularity almost architectural.

"A pillared shade with echoing walks between."

Under these tented groves the Persian carpets are spread, as well as many a Cashmere shawl, and mantle of orange or purple; and among them the revellers dispose themselves in festal companies, some smoking their pipes, some drinking sherbet, some restraining a truant curl with the aid of a pearl-compassed hand mirror, some watching the feats of a conjuror, some listening to a minstrel, Jewish, Greek, or Wallachian, and some in deep attention to a storyteller from Persia or Arabia, whose endless narrative is interrupted now and then by a fearless laugh ringing from the heart. From group to group pass, as the day wears on, the dark slave carrying water from the fountain in a silver pitcher, the confectioner laden with baskets of fruit and sherbet, and—the strangest part of the spectacle—the Frank stranger, inquisitive and ill

at ease, and looking as if he longed for business, sandwiches, and the *Times* newspaper, or even for *Galignani*.

In this secluded valley and its neighbourhood, are many interesting objects. Not far from the Bosphorus, and in the midst of noble trees, stands the fountain of Guiuk-Suy, which gives to the district its eastern name. It is built of white marble, and is richly adorned with arabesques. The Sultan possesses here one of his fifty-seven palaces built on the Bosphorus in the vain endeavour to enjoy all its beauties at once, by adding Omnipresence to his other attributes. For ages the Commanders of the Faithful have made this valley their favourite resort, especially in the summer. Here they sit in state, and are wondered at by their subjects. Here they smoke an amber-headed pipe, so long that, (as they mark the ascending wreaths of smoke in mood more and more abstracted,) while the nearer end of it is grasped close in the region of space and time, the remoter seems to them to hang over the limits of the universe, or

rest on the garden wall of Paradise, watched by expectant Houris. Here they drink their coldest sherbet, and wish for a palate as long as the neck of a swan, or the tallest lily stem that quivers in the Bosphorus. Here they meditate on abysmal subjects :—on the character of the Prophet, on their own magnificence, prosperity, and sanctity ; on the countless attributes of Allah, and his surpassing glories, as set forth in the triumph of the faithful people, the immutable decrees of fate, the splendour of peacocks' tails, and the wonderful flavour of "conserve of roses." Who can wonder if, after burying themselves in such contemplations, their head should spin round as though they had drunk of the prohibited liquor, and they should send the bowstring to a distant Pacha, command half a dozen of their children to be put to death, or even prohibit to the faithful the "nourriture" of the b Beard and the use of the sacred turban ?

Close to the Asian valley of sweet waters rises the Anadoli Hissari, one of the celebrated "Castles of Europe and Asia !" In

later times it was used as the prison of the Bostangis (the Sultan's body-guard), who were occasionally somewhat rapidly transferred from its dungeons to the keeping of the Bosphorus. On the opposite side of the strait is the Roumeli Hissari, or European Castle, built, as is asserted, on a ground plan, the foundation walls of which form the letters of the Prophet's name. This castle was the prison of the Janissaries. One of its most important parts bears the ominous name of "the Tower of Blood." In it the chiefs of the Janissaries, when suspected of conspiracy, were executed in secrecy, lest the allegiance of the body should be disturbed, whence they were conveyed by a subterranean passage to the water that rushes beyond its walls. When one remembers the multitudes whose last sob has been stifled by the waves of the Bosphorus, one is not surprised at a superstition prevalent, namely, that the wailing sea-fowl which fly above the strait, in multitudes that sometimes darken it, are the souls of the departed, subjected to a state of penance. It was between these


castles that Darius constructed that bridge of boats with which he connected the two continents.

Far more interesting, however, in its associations, is the village of Candalie, which tradition has united, whether justly or not, with the story of Europa, a fairer link between the two continents. Those who place no faith in the Bull which gave the Bosphorus its name, may, notwithstanding believe that Europe once sent forth a Lover, as brave and as unscrupulous, who lifted up his eyes to the daughter of Asia as she sported among "her comrades equal-aged," and who was as richly crowned by her as Jupiter was said to have been, when from the milk-white flanks of the illusive shape he assumed, the garlands fell upon the deep.

How different in character is that poetic legend, which celebrates the union of Asia with Europe, from the sublime truth at once of faith and science, which impelled the barque of the great European discoverer to a new Continent beyond a more perilous sea. The contrast between the artistic love-fiction and



the heroic triumph of knowledge, illustrates in so small degree, the opposite spirit which animated the early Hellenic mind, and directed the aspirations of modern Europe. And yet how much, even for us moderns, is contained in that ancient legend ! What mighty result is destined ultimately to spring from the united energies of Europe and America we know not ; but we know that it is from the union of Asia and Europe, symbolised in the Rape of Europa, that we owe almost all of high and noble that we possess. It was in Greece that the influences of the East and West first met ; and assuredly at the confluence of these two mighty tides the human intelligence mounted to a height never before known. What is there deep or great among us in which an eastern element is not to be traced ? All our arts, (elaborated indeed with a zeal which the graver Hebrew would have stigmatised as but a “following out of strange inventions,”) so far as they acknowledge an Hellenic origin, rest on an Asiatic foundation. All our moral



and metaphysical systems are but new adaptations of ancient Oriental philosophy. The whole hierarchical structure of European society, so far as it is based on the idea of graduated orders, and not merely on superior force, is but the development, under whatever name of feudality, clanship, or aristocracy, of a principle as old as the patriarchal times. It is the same in our religion. The Bible (considered in its external relations) was written from one end to the other of both Testaments by Asiatics, and Asiatics of a single race ; the earlier General Councils were Asiatic ; the Creeds, and the leading principles of Church government, so far as they are to be counted human in origin, come to us from the East. In most of the greatest minds that have risen up among us, even in modern times, an Asiatic element is to be traced with more or less of distinctness. Wherever we build with solid materials we build on an Asiatic foundation ; and Shem, amid the isles of the Gentiles, reposes in those tents which his more active brother Japhet is ever planting and shifting.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONSTANTINOPLE.

St. Sophia's—Interior of St. Sophia's—The Achmetie—Its Court—Fountain—Inscriptions—The Yeric Djami—The Sulimanic—Its Interior—A Christian Church—Ancient Mosaics—The Golden Horn—Cemetery and Mosque of Eyoub—The European "Valley of Sweet Waters"—The Armenians—The "Mosque of Blood."

No other buildings in Constantinople approach in interest to the mosques, all of which derive a character of grandeur from the fortunate circumstance that they follow the model exhibited in that building which made Justinian give thanks to God, who had permitted him to raise a cathedral that surpassed the glory of Solomon's Temple. After the lapse of nearly fourteen centuries, St. Sophia continues to lift on high that dome, the first that ever was raised to any great elevation, and remains the Mother Church, as it may be called, of every dome-surmounted fane in Europe. To its family belong St. Mark's at Venice, the glorious

Duomo of Florence, our own St. Paul's—nay, St. Peter's itself. How many of its children have died before it : how many may it not still be destined to survive ! It is the third temple that has stood on that spot. The first St. Sophia, built by the great Constantine, was destroyed by an earthquake ; the second, built by Constantius, fell a victim to popular tumult, being burned in one of those intestine feuds which troubled Constantinople during the earlier part of Justinian's reign. The present building has suffered little external change, and may yet lift the Greek Cross into heaven, and suspend its firmament over a Christian altar, centuries after the Crescent has ceased to insult the European shores.

The comparative flatness of St. Sophia's principal dome deprives it of that soaring expression which belongs to some of its great descendants ; but he would be an undiscerning as well as a cold critic who could see little to admire in this venerable pile. It does not carry its head, it is true, with as lofty a port as its

neighbour, the Achmetie ; but it still expresses a venerable strength, although a strength which needs, as well as imparts, protection. Its low dome, flat as that of a tonsured head, leans for support on those mighty walls which again lean upon others beyond them, gradually decreasing in elevation, so as to give to the upper part of the building somewhat of a pyramidal effect. A succession of half domes and shelving roofs press upon these walls, which are connected with each other by an endless series of buttresses and arches. The whole building seems thus to lean inwards upon itself for support, bound together, like an empire in decline, by multitudinous bands and props, one growing out of another. It is characteristic of the Greeks, as lovers of Knowledge rather than of Law or of Rule, that this, their great cathedral, should have been dedicated to the Eternal *Wisdom* of the Father. The Romans called their metropolitan church (the palatial temple of the world) by the name of him to whom were committed the Keys ; and the English conse-

crated their great modern church to the Apostle of the Nations. Such actions, even when determined in part by accident, indicate something as to the aspirations, if not as to the habits and characters, of nations.

St. Sophia, like every other religious building in Constantinople, is approached through a large and cloistral court. This court is paved with marble, and over its shining platform many a plane-tree casts its shade. In the midst is a marble fountain, covered with an octagonal roof, which projects far beyond it, and screened by a lattice-work of iron. In this water the devotee washes before he enters the sacred building; and many a group spread their carpets and smoke their pipes around, interspersed with pilgrims from remote lands, and merchants who sell relics, amulets, and other merchandise of a less dignified order.

Few Christians have ever been allowed to examine in its details the interior of St. Sophia's; a glance from the doors, or a hurried survey, is commonly the traveller's utmost boast. The

opposition thrown in the way of a leisurely inspection is the less to be regretted, however, as it is the interior of the building which has suffered most by that change which has converted it into a mosque. Its main features remain still unsubverted. The Turks were not barbarous conquerors : indeed, the very day on which St. Sophia's fell into their hands, Mahomet the Second, observing a fanatical soldier tear up the mosaic pavement, admonished him to reverence with his scimeter. Whitewash, however, has done its best to deface what it has not destroyed. Probably whoever has wandered round St. Mark's has seen what more nearly resembles the St. Sophia of Justinian than the traveller who explores the building at the present day. Its dome, composed of pumice-stone and brick, and pierced with twenty-four windows, is a hundred and fifteen feet in diameter, and hangs at the height of a hundred and eighty above the pavement, the vast arches which support it resting upon four massive piles, flanked by four columns of Egyptian granite.

The building, which externally is nearly square, being two hundred and seventy-three feet in length, by two hundred and forty-seven in breadth, is internally divided by pillars into the shape of a Greek cross. It is, however, the general character of the building only which remains unchanged. We should now probably look in vain for the western vestibule in which the penitents took their humble station ; and certainly, for its baptistery, its gorgeous sacristy, the marble balustrade separating the nave from the choir, and terminated by the thrones of the Emperor and the Patriarch, the altar in the eastern apse, the seats of the clergy around it, the brazen galleries and gates of bronze, and the countless mosaics, precious stones and metals with which the shrine was enriched.

The marbles of St. Sophia were the most elaborate and varied that the world could supply, including, among its hundred columns, every species ; the pale Carystian, the Phrygian of rose colour or purple, the starred porphyry of Egypt, the green Laconian, the golden



Mauritanian, the black Celtic, and as many more ; besides every variety of agate and jasper, which private zeal or public munificence could transport from the quarries of Asia Minor, the Greek islands, and every subject land between Persia and Spain. Few great churches have been raised with such rapidity as St. Sophia's. Under the care of Anthemius, the architect, and his ten thousand labourers, encouraged by the familiarity of the Emperor, who is said to have inspected at stated intervals their advancing work, clothed in a linen tunic, the cathedral was completed in less than six years from its foundation.

Near to St. Sophia's, between it and the Hippodrome, stands one of the loftiest and richest of the mosques, that which bears the name of the Sultan Achmet. Lifting on high its haughty dome, the curve of which is far more elevated than that of its neighbour, it differs from the church of Justinian as an elm differs from a spreading oak. Beneath the central cupola are clustered several smaller

domes and half-domes. The Achmetie boasts no fewer than six minarets, each enwreathed with three galleries, from one of which the clear tones of the Muezzin pealing out of the shining vault, like a divine summons, calls the people to prayer. Every royal mosque is marked by the adjunct of two minarets, and several of them possess four, but the Achmetie alone has six. It is to be hoped that, whenever the Russians are in possession of Constantinople, they will not pull down those light and beautiful structures, which, rising from an undergrowth of domes, produce a singularly fortunate effect, analogous to that which we observe in our pleasure grounds, where the cypress or the Lombardy poplar spires up from a thicket of round-headed shrubs.

The court of the Achmetie is surrounded by a cloister, the pillars of which consist of many-coloured marbles, (fortunately not white-washed), supporting arches each of which is crowned by a low dome. In the centre stands a hexagonal fountain, the dome of which rests upon six

sharp and lofty arches in their turns supported by the quaint elaborate capitals of the slender columns. The beauty of these fountains is much increased by their golden lattices which cast a glittering net-work on the dark water within, and a braided shadow on the pavement around. In this court you see amid the motley crowd, as usual, the merchant with his wares, and the Turk with his pipe, or sometimes a votary absorbed in prayer, and kneeling with forehead to the pavement. Far above all, seen over this cloistral arcade, rises the central dome, and one or two of those minarets, the line of which serves to define its curve. The cloisters of most mosques are largely frequented by those friendly and fearless birds which the Moslems so reverently protect. In one of them so vast is the number of doves, attracted thither by the liberality of the Faithful, that when they rise from the pavement on which they have been feeding, the echoes of the court are thrilled with a soft thunder, and the air is shaken as by a storm, while the branches of the almonds

wave around in the darkened space, and a few blossoms patter to the ground.

The porches through which you enter the mosques are among the most picturesque parts of the buildings. They are surmounted by exquisite little vaults or roofs, as richly fretted with carved work as the roof of a Bishop's Throne in one of our cathedrals. Above them extend, winding in golden traceries, inscriptions in the Arabic character, consisting chiefly of sentences from the Koran, which, flashing from a groundwork of dark green or purple, gleam like mimic constellations reflected in a sea. Everywhere in Constantinople, over gate, and tomb, and bath, and palace front, you are confronted by those blazoned texts from the Koran, which are scattered as widely as devout pictures are in Roman Catholic countries, and look as if the endeavour had been to make the city one great Book. Nowhere has bibliolatriy, or devotion to a book, been carried farther than among the Moslems. The reason is to be found, probably, in the fact that their religion, instead of

*including* a law, is simply a law, as well as in the rationalistic character of their mind, and in the absence of imaginative sentiment within them, and of the more genial arts around them.

The Yeric Djami, or mosque of the Sultana Valide, is the most picturesque of all in its position, rising close to the ferry between Galata and Stamboul, in a neighbourhood ever thronged by travellers new landed, merchants hastening to inspect their goods, and idlers frequenting the market-place for news. From the midst of the sombre or gaudy buildings, huddled in strange confusion along the shore, it lifts up its serene and radiant mass like a vision of purity in a corrupt world : almost beneath its shadow the homeward boat swings with furled sails upon the green and darkened wave, now falling back from the wall, and now dashing against it ; and within its ken innumerable caiques, those Arab steeds of the sea, fleet over the sunny expanse in the distance. The most characteristic feature of this mosque is its majestic portal, consisting of three vast and lofty arches, the

pillars of which rest on a wide flight of marble steps. Looking through these porches, which from their great depth are dusky as a grotto, you see dimly its brazen gates studded with mother-of-pearl. In line with these porches runs a terrace, surmounted by a sort of double gallery, consisting of two ranges of arches, one above another. These arches, which form mainly the outer wall of the building, are of two different heights and sizes, the larger and the smaller occurring alternately, and are supported on the florid capitals of low pillars. The picturesque effect of this façade is much increased by the immediate neighbourhood of two immense maple trees, which lift their hollow turrets high into the air, and extend their fresh green canopy against a sky of glistening blue. Beneath the dome rests the tomb of the foundress.

In one respect the "Suliemanie," or mosque of Solyman the Magnificent, is the most imposing of all these structures, occupying, as it does, the most elevated ground in Constantinople. Beside its central dome, it is surmounted by ten others

of inferior size, and by several half domes. It measures 234 feet in length by 227 in breadth, and its internal court is also of unusually large dimensions. Before its lofty portal stands a range of columns of Egyptian granite, and above it runs an Arabic inscription, stating that the Lord of the Earth, the Commander of the Faithful, and the Conqueror of East and West, the tenth Emperor of the Ottomans, had raised this temple to the glory of God, the Creator of the universe, between the years 1550 and 1556—about the same number of years having sufficed for the building of Solyman's and of Justinian's temple.

The Suliemanie, like most other mosques, has its cloister, its minarets, its fountain, its pious institution (in this instance a bedlam), and its Medresseh or college. There are not fewer than twelve such colleges, with libraries attached to them, in Constantinople ; but their learning, I fear, may be numbered among the things gone by. The interior is stately, though not divested of that characteristic coldness and blankness

which belongs to mosques. Its domes, round the lower region of which runs a sort of belt pierced through with numerous very minute windows, are supported each by four vast arches. These arches are in some instances partially filled up by a wall, itself supported by smaller arches propped on pillars, and pierced in its higher compartment by several ranges of round-headed windows. Beneath the chief dome runs a circle of brass, from which innumerable coloured lamps, lighted at night, are suspended by chains. The effect is brilliant, of course, but theatrical rather than ecclesiastic. The pillars of the Suleimanie are brought chiefly from Alexandria Troas. The walls are decorated with gilded traceries, consisting of sentences from the Koran, as well as the many mystical names of the Creator, inscribed in Arabic. These are the chief mosques in Constantinople, and the models after which the rest have been built. Most of them abound in precious marbles, and many of them possess interesting peculiarities. The most interesting



to Christian eyes is that which bears the name of "Kilisi giamisi." It was originally a church built by the Emperor Anastasius ; and, like St. Sophia's, it pines in bondage. By a fortunate accident, there remain on one of its domes some pictures in mosaic, representing the crucifixion and other sacred themes. How they escaped the Turkish fanaticism it is hard to say.

There are few things which the sojourner at Constantinople enjoys more than an expedition by boat up the winding haven of the "Golden Horn," a title which might equally be justified by the glorious light which morning and evening fling upon the mouth of the harbour, and by the matchless provision made there for Commerce ; which, following its windings for seven miles through the city, might empty her Cornucopia on its banks. On one side, as you enter it, extends the Seraglio, and, beyond it, St. Sophia and the mosque of the Sultan Achmet : on the other, rises the Frank city of Pera, with its suburbs of Tophana and Galata, domineered over by the ambassadors of the great European

Powers, who, in the present decrepit condition of the Ottoman empire, far from being exposed to any chance of an imprisonment in the Seven Towers, are looked up to as so many kings, both by the inhabitants of Stamboul and by their own countrymen. Your caique shoots rapidly along the water, passing the ships of all nations, which lie so close to the citted shores that their canvas seems to lean on the projecting roofs. Pursuing your way beyond a wooden bridge of great length which spans the flood, you reach, at its further end, the district of Eyoub, situated at the north-eastern extremity of Stamboul, and regarded as its most sacred region. Far up the hill, and commanding the noblest views from the European side of the water, rises its cemetery, only inferior in sanctity to that of the Asiatic Scutari. Among the tombs which its multitudinous cypresses shade, is that of the far-famed Ali Pacha of Yanina. The contrast between the two views commanded from this cemetery is striking; one of them extending over the city, the sea, the Bosphorus, Scutari,

and, behind it, the dark steep of Bulgurlu, and being, therefore, eminently marked by the characteristic splendour of Constantinopolitan scenery ; while the other reveals to you a quiet and shady glen, the European "Valley of Sweet Waters," with its deep green grass and its stately trees.

The Mosque of Eyoub is one of the largest in Constantinople, and, probably, is the richest. On this subject, however, we have nothing but conjecture to guide us ; for no Christian, I believe, has ever been admitted into its interior. This temple is the great sanctuary of Stamboul—a sort of domestic Mecca. It was raised by Mahomet the Second, a few years after the capture of Constantinople, in memory of a certain warrior of the Faith, and companion in arms of the Prophet himself, who fell, a martyr in the estimate of his brother warriors, during the siege by the Saracens, A.D. 668. The exact spot on which the Arabian chief perished was revealed in a dream to the Sultan, if we are to trust his account of the matter. Mahomet the

Second set another seal upon the sanctity of this temple, by decreeing that, within its walls, the Sultans should be girded with the Sword of Empire, successively and for ever. The ceremonial is ever performed by the Scheick of the Mevlevi Dervishes, entitled Mollah Hunkiar, in whose family the right remains, on account of its being descended from the race of the Abbassides. The representative of that sacred race may be an old man on the verge of the tomb, or he may be an infant ; but until his hands have bound the girdle of the Sword of Othman, the Sultan lacks that religious consecration which invests him with his two-fold dignity of Emperor and Commander of the Faithful.

This ceremony does not inappropriately take place in the temple dedicated to the memory of Eyoub, or Job. In his youth he had been among those who sheltered Mahomet, when a fugitive. He had fought under the standard of the Crescent in many an arduous battle : he had been a follower of Ali, as well as of the Prophet ; and it was in his old age that the

Arab chieftain engaged in that enterprise against what he, no doubt, considered as the metropolis of Christendom, which, as Mahomet had announced, assured the forgiveness of their sins to all soldiers serving in the holy cause. The followers of the Prophet regard him with feelings similar to those once entertained among Christians toward Godfrey of Bulloigne, or any other great Crusading chief.

Beyond the district of Eyoub, and the limits of the city, lies a vale, still as a convent, and one of my favourite resorts while in Constantinople—the celebrated “Valley of the Sweet Waters.” It is surrounded on all sides by hills, which shield without over-shadowing it; and its smooth expanse is covered with the richest and greenest grass (the pasture during spring of the Sultan’s Arab horses), and traversed by the silver current of the Barbyses, winding its way to the “Golden Horn.” Over this shallow but secluded vale, trees of a stately height and venerable age are scattered, sometimes singly, but more often in groups. In summer this spot is, even more

than the Asiatic valley of sweet waters, the resort of all who love idleness or gaiety. On these occasions it is not the votaries of pleasure only whom you meet ; the merchant is there likewise, and not a little of business is transacted. There the Greek makes his bargain, and talks his customer out of patience, if not out of countenance. The Jew there realises his profit, and there the patient Armenian meditates, and turns whatever happens to the best account. That race interested me much during my stay at Constantinople. They belong for the most part to the Greek Church, but they are divided into several distinct religious communities ; and no small proportion of them are governed by a Patriarch, who, though he preserves many local peculiarities of worship, acknowledges the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff. One recognises them at once by their high and oval foreheads, round which the hair is shaven, their extreme pallor, which in some parts of the face seems tinged with a faint lilac, their singular smoothness of countenance, their expression of long

suffering (they have clung in their captivity to their ancestral institutes with almost a Jewish fidelity), and a certain heavy gleam in the drooping eye, which resembles a dying lamp when the light has burned down to the oil in which it is mirrored.

The Sultan retires for a portion of each year to his palace in the "Valley of the Sweet Waters," and to this quiet region the imperial harem is transferred on these occasions. That transference creates a great confusion in the city, the surrounding hills being occupied with troops, while a regular *cordon* is established round the valley to prevent the public from catching even a distant sight of the fair Sultanas, whose progress is conducted with as much mystery as attended the ride of Godiva. A more interesting object than the palace is seen at the remoter end of the glen : a mosque, which lonely and retired as it is, derives a deeper seclusion from the thick plane-trees that cluster around it, through which its crowded domes are hardly visible. The whole of this

mosque is painted red, and its history is implied in its ominous title, “The Mosque of Blood.” During a period of intestine feud at Constantinople it was broken into by a body of soldiers, many of whom perished on its pavement; in consequence of which desecration, it now stands a deserted temple. There is something at once mysterious and touching in the aspect of this forsaken fane, which was the goal of many of my wanderings among the hills around Stamboul.



## CHAPTER IX.

### ADVENTURE IN A HAREM.

A French Adventurer—Fortune made by Conjuring—Conjuring Exploits—Visit to the House of a Turk—His Mother—His Wives—Beauty of Eastern Women—The Favourite—Circassian Beauty—Failure of the Conjuror's Incantations—A Timely Retreat.

A SHORT time before leaving Constantinople I enjoyed a piece of good fortune which I believe has fallen to the lot of few men. Often as I passed by the garden walls of some rich Pacha, I felt, as every one who visits Constantinople feels, no small desire to penetrate into that mysterious region—his harem—and see something more than the mere exterior of Turkish life. “The traveller landing at Stamboul complains,” I used to say to myself, “of the contrast between its external aspect and the interior of the city; but the real interior, that is the inside of the houses, the guarded retreats of those veiled forms which one passes in gilded caiques—

of these he sees nothing." Fortune favoured my aspirations. I happened to make acquaintance with a young Frenchman, lively, spirited, and confident, who had sojourned at Constantinople for a considerable time, and who bore there the character of prophet, magician, and I know not what beside. The fact is, that he was a very clever fellow, living on his wits, ever ready to turn his hand to anything, and numbering among his other accomplishments, a skill in conjuring feats extraordinary even in the East. He used to exhibit frequently before the Sultan, who always sent him away laden with presents, and who would, probably, had he professed the Mahometan Faith, have made him his Prime Minister or his Lord High Admiral.

There was nothing which this conjuror could not do. He told me that on one occasion, dining in a numerous company, he had contrived to pick the pocket of every one present, depriving one of his watch, another of his purse, and a third of his pocket-handkerchief. As soon as the guests discovered their losses, to

which he managed to direct their attention, a scene of violent excitement ensued, every one accusing his neighbour of theft ; and at last it was agreed that the police should be sent for to search the pockets of all present. The police arrived, and the search was duly made, but without any effect. "I think," said the young magician, "it would be but fair that the police should themselves undergo the same scrutiny to which we have all submitted." The suggestion was immediately acted on ; and to the amazement of all present, and especially of the supposed culprits, in the pockets of the police all the missing articles were found.

The life of this man had been strange and eventful. Having quarrelled with his family in early youth he had assumed an incognito, and enlisted as a private soldier, I forget in what service. On one occasion, in his first campaign, he was left for dead on the field of battle. In the evening some peasants visited the field for the sake of plunder. He was badly wounded, but had his wits sufficiently about him to know

that, if he wished not to have his throat cut, he had better lie still and feign to be dead. In his turn he was visited by the marauders ; but, as fame goes, it turned out that while they were hunting after the few pence he possessed, he contrived to lighten their pockets of their accumulated spoil. He had grown tired of war, however, and had settled in Constantinople, where he embarked in all manner of speculations, being bent, among other things, upon establishing a theatre at Pera. In all reverses he came down, like a cat, on his feet : he was sanguine and good-humoured, always disposed to shuffle the cards till the right one came up ; and, trusting a good deal to Fortune, while he improved what she gave, he was of course rich in her good graces.

One day this youth called on me, and mention that a chance had befallen him which he should be glad to turn to account,—particularly if sure of not making too intimate an acquaintance with the Bosphorus in the attempt. A certain wealthy Turk had applied to him for

assistance under very trying domestic circumstances. His favourite wife had lost a precious ring, which had doubtless been stolen either by one of his other wives, under the influence of jealousy, or by a female slave. Would the magician pay a visit to his house, recover the ring, and expose the delinquent? "Now," said he, "if I once get within the walls, I shall be sure to force my way into the female apartments on some pretence. If I find the ring, all is well: but if not, this Turk will discover that I have been making a fool of him. However, as he is a favourite at Court, and cannot but know in what flattering estimation I am held there, he will probably treat me with the distinction I deserve. In fine, I will try it. Will you come too? you can help me in my incantations, which will serve as an excuse." The proposal was too tempting to be rejected, and at the hour agreed on we set off in such state as we could command (in the East, state is essential to respect), jogging over the rough streets, in one of those hearse-like carriages without

springs, which bring one's bones upon terms of far too intimate a mutual acquaintance.

We reached at last a gate, which promised little ; but ere long we found ourselves in one of those "high-walled gardens, green and old," which are among the glories of the East. Passing between rows of orange and lemon-trees, we reached the house, where we were received by a goodly retinue of slaves, and conducted, accompanied by our dragoman, through a long suite of apartments. In the last of them stood a tall, handsome, and rather youthful man, in splendid attire, who welcomed us with a grave courtesy. We took our seats, and were presented in due form with long pipes, and with coffee, to me far more acceptable. After a sufficient interval of time had passed for the most meditative and abstracted of men to remember his purpose, our host, reminded of what he had apparently forgotten by my companion's conjuring robes, an electrical machine, and other instruments of incantation, which the slaves carried from our carriage, civilly enquired

when we intended to commence operations. "What operations?" demanded my companion, with much apparent unconcern. "The discovery of the ring." "Whenever his Highness pleased, and it suited the female part of his household to make their appearance," was the answer.

At this startling proposition even the Oriental sedateness of our majestic host gave way, and he allowed his astonishment and displeasure to become visible. "Who ever heard," he demanded, "of the wives of a true believer being shown to a stranger, and that stranger an Infidel and a Frank?" As much astonished in our turn, we demanded, "When a magician had ever been heard of, who could discover a stolen treasure without being confronted either with the person who had lost or the person who had appropriated it?" For at least two hours, though relieved by intervals of silence, the battle was carried on with much occasional vehemence on his part, and on ours with an assumption of perfect indifference. Our host at last, perceiving that our obstinacy was equal to the decrees

of Fate, retired, as we were informed, to consult his Mother on the subject. In a few minutes he returned, and assured us that our proposition was ridiculous ; upon which we rose with much dignified displeasure, and moved toward the door, stating that our beards had been made little of. A grave-looking man who belonged to the household of our host, and occupied apparently a sort of semi-ecclesiastical position, now interposed, and after some consultation it was agreed that as we were not mere men, but prophets, and infidel saints, an exception might be made in our favour without violation of the Mussulman law ; not, indeed, to the extent of allowing us to profane the inner sanctuary of the harem with our presence, but so far as to admit us into an apartment adjoining it, where the women would be summoned to attend us.

Accordingly, we passed through a long suite of rooms, and at last found ourselves in a chamber lofty and large, fanned by a breeze from the Bosphorus, over which its lattices were suspended, skirted by a low divan, covered with



carpets and cushions, and "invested with per-  
petual gleams" by the splendid hangings through  
which the light feebly strove. Among a con-  
fused heap of crimson pillows and orange dra-  
perry, at the remote end of the apartment, sat,  
or rather reclined, the mother of our reluctant  
host. I could observe only that she was aged,  
and lay there as still as if she had belonged to  
the vegetable, not the human world. Usually  
she was half-veiled by the smoke of her long pipe ;  
but when its wreaths chanced to float aside or  
grow thin, her dark eyes were fixed upon us with  
an expression half indifferent and half averse.

Presently a murmur of light feet was heard  
in an adjoining chamber :—on it moved along  
the floor of the gallery ; and in trooped the com-  
pany of wives and female slaves. They laughed  
softly and musically as they entered, but seemed  
frightened also ; and at once raising their shawls  
and drawing down their veils, they glided simul-  
taneously into a semicircle, and stood there with  
hands folded on their breasts. I sat opposite to  
them, drinking coffee and smoking, or pretend-

ing to smoke a pipe eight feet long : at one side stood the Mollah and some male members of the household : at the other, stood the handsome husband, apparently but little contented with the course matters had taken ; and my friend, the magician, moved about among the implements of his art clad in a black gown spangled with flame-coloured devices, strange enough to strike a bold heart with awe. Beyond the semicircle stood two children, a boy and a girl, holding in their hands twisted rods of barley-sugar about a yard long each, which they sucked assiduously the whole time of our visit. There they stood, mute and still as statues, with dark eyes fixed, now on us, and now on the extremity of their sugar wands.

My companion commenced operations by displaying a number of conjuring tricks intended to impress all present with the loftiest opinion of his powers, and stopped every now and then to make his dragoman explain that it would prove in vain to endeavour to deceive a being endowed with such gifts. To these expositions the

women apparently paid but little attention ; but the conjuring feats delighted them ; and again and again they laughed until, literally, the head of each dropped on her neighbour's shoulder. After a time the husband, who alone had never appeared the least entertained, interposed, and asked the conjuror whether he had yet discovered the guilty party. With the utmost coolness, my friend replied, " Certainly not : how could he while his Highness's wives continued veiled ? " This new demand created new confusion and a long debate : I thought, however, that the women seemed rather to advocate our cause. The husband, the Mollah, and the mother again consulted ; and in another moment the veils had dropped, and the beauty of many an Eastern nation stood before us revealed.

Four of those unveiled Orientals were, as we were informed, wives, and six were slaves. The former were beautiful indeed, though beautiful in different degrees and in various styles of beauty : of the latter two only. They were,

all of them, tall, slender, and dark-eyed, "shadowing high beauty in their airy brows," and uniting a mystical with a luxurious expression, like that of Sibyls who had been feasting with Cleopatra. There was something to me strange as well as lovely in their aspect—as strange as their condition, which seems a state half-way between marriage and widowhood. They see no man except their husband ; and a visit from him (except in the case of the Favourite) is a rare and marvellous occurrence, like an eclipse of the sun. Their bearing toward each other was that of sisters : in their movements I remarked an extraordinary sympathy, which was the more striking on account of their rapid transitions from the extreme of alarm to child-like wonder, and again to boundless mirth.

The favourite wife was a Circassian, and a fairer vision it would not be easy to see. Intellectual in expression she could hardly be called ; yet she was full of dignity, as well as of pliant grace and of sweetness. Her large black eyes, beaming with a soft and stealthy radiance,

seemed as if they would have yielded light in the darkness ; and the heavy waves of her hair, which, in the excitement of the tumultuous scene, she carelessly flung over her shoulders, gleamed like a mirror. Her complexion was the most exquisite I have ever seen, its smooth and pearly purity being tinged with a colour, unlike that of flower or of fruit, of bud or of berry, but which reminded me of the vivid and delicate tints which sometimes streak the inside of a shell. Though tall she seemed as light as if she had been an embodied cloud, hovering over the rich carpets like a child that does not feel the weight of its body ; and though stately in the intervals of rest, her mirth was a sort of rapture. She, too, had that peculiar luxuriousness of aspect, in no degree opposed to modesty, which belongs to the East : around her lips was wreathed, in their stilness, an expression at once pleasurable and pathetic, which seemed ever ready to break forth into a smile : her hands seemed to leave with regret whatever they had rested on, and in parting to

leave something behind ; and in all her soft and witching beauty she reminded me of Browning's lines—

“ No swan-soft woman, rubbed in lucid oils,  
The gift of an enamoured god, more fair.”

As feat succeeded to feat, and enchantment to enchantment, all remnant of reserve was discarded, and no trace remained of that commingled alarm and pleased expectation which had characterised those beaming countenances when first they emerged from their veils. Those fair women floated around us, and tossed their hands in the air, wholly forgetting that their husband was by. Still, however, we had made but little progress in our inquiry ; and when the magician informed them that they had better not try to conceal anything from him, their only answer was a look that said, “ You came here to give us pleasure, not to cross-question us.” Resolved to use more formidable weapons, he began to arrange an electrical machine, when the Mollah, after glancing at it two or three times, approached and asked

him whether that instrument also was supernatural. The quick-witted Frenchman replied at once, "By no means ; it is a mere scientific toy." Then, turning to me, he added, in a low voice, "He has seen it before—probably, he has travelled." In a few minutes, the women were ranged in a ring, and linked hand in hand. He then informed them, through our interpreter; that if a discovery was not immediately made, each person should receive, at the same moment, a blow from an invisible hand ; that, the second time, the admonition would be yet severer ; and that, the third time, if his warning was still despised, the culprit would drop down dead. This announcement was heard with much gravity, but no confession followed it : the shock was given, and the lovely circle was speedily dislinked, "with shrieks and laughter." Again the shock was given, and with the same effect ; but this time the laughter was more subdued. Before making his last essay, the magician addressed them in a long speech, telling them that he had already discovered the secret, that

if the culprit confessed, he would make intercession for her, but that, if she did not, she must take the consequences. Still no confession was made. For the first time, my confident friend looked downcast. "It will not do," he said to me; "the ring cannot be recovered: they know nothing about it: probably it was lost. We cannot fulfil our engagement; and, indeed, I wish," he added, "that we were well out of all this."

I confess I wished the same, especially when I glanced at the master of the household, who stood apart, gloomy as a thunder-cloud, and with the look of a man who thinks himself in a decidedly false position. The Easterns do not understand a jest, especially in a harem; and not being addicted to irony (that great safety-valve for enthusiasm), they pass rapidly from immoveability to very significant and sometimes disagreeable action. Speaking little, they deliver their souls by acting. I should have been glad to hear our host talk, even though in a stormy voice: on the whole, however, I trusted much



to the self-possession and address of my associate. Nor was I deceived. "Do as you see me do," he said to me and the dragoman ; and then, immediately after giving the third shock, which was as ineffectual as those that preceded it, he advanced to our grim host with a face radiant with satisfaction, and congratulated him vehemently. "You are a happy man," he said. "Your household has not a flaw in it. Fortunate it was that you sent for the wise man : I have discovered the matter." "What have you discovered?" "The fate of the ring. It has never been stolen : if it had, I would have restored it to you. Fear nothing ; your household is trustworthy and virtuous. I know where the ring is ; but I should deceive you if I bade you hope ever to find it again. This is a great mystery, and the happy consummation surpasses even my hopes. Adieu. The matter has turned out just as you see. You were born under a lucky star. Happy\* is the man whose household is trustworthy, and who, when his faith is tried, ~~for~~ is a faithful counsellor. I

forbid you, henceforth and for ever, to distrust any one of your wives."

It would be impossible to describe the countenance of our Mussulman friend during this harangue. There he stood, like a tree half in sunshine and half in shade ; gratification struggling with displeasure in his countenance, and wonder eclipsing both. It was not by any means our policy to wait until he had adjusted the balance, and made up his mind as to the exact degree of gratitude he owed his guests. On, accordingly, we passed to the door. In a moment the instinct of courtesy prevailed, and our host made a sign to one of his retinue. His slaves preceded us with torches (it had grown late) ; and accompanied by half the household, as a guard of honour, we again traversed the large and straggling house, passed through the garden, and entered the carriage which waited for us beyond the wall. Our evening passed rapidly away as we discussed our adventure ; and I have more than once thought, with pleasure, how amusing an incident

the visit of the strangers must have been to the secluded beauties. No doubt the baths of Constantinople have rung with many a merry laugh occasioned by this invasion of the Franks. Never, perhaps, have the inmates of a harem seen so much of the infidel before, and conversed with him so familiarly, in the presence of their husband.

## CHAPTER X.

### ANCIENT AND MODERN CONSTANTINOPLE.

Defect of Constantinople as a Residence—Its Social Character repulsive of Western Sympathies—Its Religious and Domestic Institutes—Its Political Character—Analogy between the Turkish Empire and the Greek Empire—Principles of Government common to both—Character of the Social State built up by Constantine—Its absence of Simplicity—Of Personal Greatness—Of Hereditary Honours—Its Dependence on Despotism and Intrigue—Ancient Remains at Constantinople—The “Burned Pillar”—The Atmeidan—The Obelisk of Theodosius—The Monument of Constantine—The Delphic Serpents—The Ancient Hippodrome—The Column of Marcian—Palace of Belisarius—Subterranean Cisterns—The “Seven Towers.”

THERE is one source of interest of which the traveller is almost wholly deprived at Constantinople, and at Constantinople alone of European capitals—that of Society, considered in its moral and human relations. To the senses indeed, and to the intellect of an enquirer, the social condition of Constantinople presents abundant materials; but to the sympathies it is all but barren. A diversity between the customs and manners of a foreign country and of our own tends naturally to excite, not to

repress, interest, if that diversity be not too great ; but where, in addition to usages the most remote from ours, and aspirations antagonistic, as well as a different language and race, we are opposed also by that wide gulf which separates the Oriental from the Western, and the Mahométan from the Christian, the affections can find no grappling points, and the stranger, a stranger still, however long his sojourn, is thrown upon nature for companionship, and on his own thoughts for friends. Every other region in Europe—Italy, Germany, France, seems a part of your country, when your memory strays to it from the city of mosques, and baths, and tombs. It is not merely on account of its surpassing outward beauty that at Constantinople you live in a world of surfaces, not of substance. The temple, in which the worship of God is blended with that of the Arabian Prophet, is to you, as you pass it, no temple. No altar consecrates it ; neither sacrament nor creed makes it holy. Even the domestic household itself, if you chance to penetrate its jealous

gate, says nothing to you of home. The institute of slavery and the plurality of wives cut it off and excommunicate it from all associations that hover about the hearth ; and you gaze on it with an eye of curiosity alone, as you study the economy of the ant-hill. It is the same in the more complex relations of social and political life. The institutions which have necessarily gathered themselves around the Faith of the Prophet and the custom of Polygamy are such as shut them out from the sympathies of a son of the West, however regardless he may be of that religion to which almost all that his country most values, owes its existence. The social world around him is a vision as bright as the blue sea that bathes the seven-hilled city ; but the moment he dips his hand beneath the surface he is repelled by the chill. Only in the cemetery is he at home ; and the cypress and the tended grave speak to him of a fraternal humanity.

This alienation is, no doubt, increased by the absence of all that is great in the political

condition of Turkey. The religious ardour which once animated the Turkish race having passed away, nothing now remains as a substitute for it. There is nothing in its institutions on which the mind can dwell with satisfaction ; nothing in its history on which the memory finds repose ; nothing in its prospects which offers a field to hope. Its polity, durable as it has proved, is yet but a long-lived accident : we feel that it does not grow legitimately out of the nature of man, and that to that nature it permits no genuine development. Human virtue lacks there a sphere, and the noblest faculties are left without employment. Corruption and intrigue set in motion the springs of political action ; while fatalism and indolence stand in the place of content, and in the way of improvement. Progress there is none ; nor can the stranger have faith in the destinies of a race which has ceased to have faith in itself. Repulsed by the present, we take refuge in the past ; but that past reminds us of a great stain which has never been wiped out—a blot on the

escutcheon of Christendom. The most beautiful of cities rests on a foundation not its own. The outside of the platter is made clean, and the sepulchre is whitened, but the inside is full of shameful memorials. It is the great Christian capital, which has become the prey of the Infidel, and the Sultan domineers in the throne of the Cæsars. Amid the graves of martyrs, whose graves are known no more, it is impossible not to feel the past a mystery, and the present a dream.

• Lamentable as it is to reflect on that change which has substituted the Crescent for the Cross at Constantinople, it is yet impossible not to remember, that that metropolis, even in its earliest and most vigorous days, was, in name alone, a second Rome ; that in its institutions, manners, and morals, the Lower Empire bore from the first almost as close an analogy to eastern as to western monarchies ; and that in its earliest history we can find, too often, a parallel to those deeds of darkness which disgrace the Turkish annals. The jealousy of Roxalana



did not exercise a more fatal influence over the children of Solyman than did that of Fausta, the second wife of Constantine, over her step-son, Crispus, condemned at her instance by his own father, and sent without a trial from Rome to Pola, where the secret edict for his death was carried into execution. The massacre of so many members of his father's family carried out by Constantius, within a few days of Constantine's death, (an enormity avenged by the speedy extinction of the Imperial House,) was certainly never surpassed in atrocity by the crime of a Sultan too jealous to bear "a brother near his throne!" The massacre of the Janisseries is among us reckoned a somewhat strong illustration of oriental State-policy; yet what was it when compared with that of the Gothic youth slaughtered A.D. 378. After the death of Valens, the sons of the Goths had been distributed among the various cities of the East. In a few years their numbers had become formidable; the fame of the Gothic war had reached their ears, and their high qualities as

well as growing attainments rendered them objects of imperial jealousy. How was the possible danger averted? A day was solemnly set apart, on which these guests of the empire were commanded to assemble in the capital cities of their respective provinces for the purpose, as they were informed, of receiving a gift of land sufficient for their future support. Unarmed and without suspicion the devoted victims congregated together in the forum of the chief cities :—in another moment the adjoining streets were blocked up with soldiers ; the roofs of the houses suddenly grew populous with archers and slingers ; the signal was given, and an indiscriminate massacre was carried on at once in every part of the eastern provinces. These crimes, the scandal of the earlier annals of the empire, were but omens of those by which its later history was clouded. It is impossible, on reading of such events, to withstand the inference that the Turkish rule was not wholly incongruous with that which it superseded. This circumstance was, perhaps, the secret of its

perseverance. When ancient thrones are subverted, the tame submission of the vanquished is not more often to be accounted for by their weakness than by the fact that their position is less changed than it seems, and that their new rulers, judged by their acts, appear to them but the legitimate successors of the old.

From the very beginning, the Roman Empire founded at Constantinople included more of the East than of the West in its political and social system. Men are frequently conquered by their own successes, and the genius of a land reduced takes possession of those who wield its sceptre. Constantine, like Alexander, had become an Oriental ; and the splendour of dress, as well as pomp and pageantry, which he affected, was such as a Trajan would have despised. The same orientalism stamped itself upon the institutions he bequeathed. This was, perhaps, unavoidable. The character of the social structure was in part determined by the soft and friable material which alone was at his command. Constantine was obliged to people his new

capital with the dregs of the Greek and the Latin civilisation, both of them effete. Beside the old inhabitants of Byzantium, and the wealthy lords of the neighbouring provinces, he attracted to his new palaces, by the bribe of the alienated demesnes of Pontus and Asia, a multitude of the corrupt senators of Rome, as well as the greediest or the most indigent of the equestrian order. The new Empire thus had no youth. It began with decrepitude ; and its earliest institutions were such as make national senility respectable, rather than those which breed up youth in virtue and wisdom.

It may be doubted, indeed, whether the social system at present prevailing in Constantinople is much more remote from that which existed at Rome during the sounder period even of its decline, than was that artificial and conventional fabric of society built up by Constantine. In his time, and in that of his immediate successors, the history of the Empire was often little more than the dreary and shameful record of the intrigues of the palace. Then, as now,

the fame and the safety of a remote governor was liable at any time to melt away before the whisper of a chamberlain. Slaves as vile as those who now guard the recesses of the Seraglio determined the fortunes of distant provinces ; and successful warriors, aged statesmen, and men of proconsular dignity, found themselves ensnared in a common net-work of intrigue, and trembled for the consequences of their imprudence if they had failed to propitiate any one of that noxious host of spies with which the Eastern World was infested. Society also at Constantinople was, from the beginning, utterly destitute of that manly simplicity which Rome, even in its decline, partially, at least, preserved among its traditions. Vanity and display ruled without a mask ; and eminence of station was no longer, even in name, connected with personal merit. The subordination of ranks, as complex and minute as it was unmeaning and arbitrary, rested upon no moral foundation of service done or protection afforded. The mere ceremonial connected with it was such as it took a life to

learn ; and when the lesson had been acquired, the whole life of man became but the perpetual rehearsal of the same dull pantomime in a theatre rich only in ill-sorted frippery and faded gold. The first and noblest form of greatness, that which rests on personal merit, had passed away : that which borders most closely upon and most palpably represents it—hereditary greatness, preserved but a shadowy existence : official rank had pushed itself into the place of both and superseded both : a nod conferred nobility, and the reflection of an imperial smile gilded the new patent. The patricians of Constantine were but tenants for life of their honours. Such titles as would have been rejected with equal scorn by the “Conscript Fathers” of ancient Rome, and by her heroes—“your *Gravity*,” “your *Magnitude*,” and “your *Highness*,” were carefully discriminated in all their ascending and descending grades, and became the rewards of men unknown in the battle-field or the senate, but familiar with the backstairs of a favourite’s office, and great

enough to enter the palace by its smallest door.

Such was the far-famed "Hierarchy of the State." Was its tinsel, after all, much superior to the honest trinketry of the bazaar? In such a state of things Constantinople must have been almost as incapable as it now is of producing families, which, like the many illustrious races of ancient Rome, gave a meaning to nobility, and entwined their honours round the solid fabric of the institutions which their virtue and their wisdom had defended. Then, as now, Absolutism could have been no accident, though the fate of successive dynasties, unloved and unlamented, may have been determined by chance. Despotism was necessarily the refuge of a people too light to sustain the weight of liberty—a people without sufficient elevation seriously to desire it, and without the courage and self-control required for its use. They needed a strong hand, not to lift up the majesty of an embodied nation, but to protect the feasts and the sports of a gregarious herd intent upon

pleasure. Then, as now, Despotism was a thing demanded by the weaknesses and vices of the time ; and then, as now, it governed by the weapons it found—corruption and fear ; and in so governing it manifested itself as the true exponent of the people ruled.

The remains of ancient buildings at Constantinople are but few and inconsiderable. Of these, one of the principal is known by the name of the “Burned Pillar.” It occupies the centre of that space on the second hill which Constantine set apart for the Forum, in commemoration of the fact that he had pitched his camp there during the siege of Byzantium. This column was originally composed of ten immense blocks of porphyry, measuring each of them about ten feet in height and thirty-three in circumference, and supported on a pedestal of white marble twenty feet high. It was surmounted by a colossal statue of bronze, brought from Phrygia, or, as some maintained, from Athens, and supposed to have been the work of Phidias. This statue, which bore on its



brows a crown of rays, and sustained a sceptre in one hand and a globe in the other, was originally a representation of Apollo, but through lapse of time had undergone a metamorphosis from which, in servile or in superstitious days, statues are by no means exempt, and bore the name of Constantine. The pillar has been much injured by fire ; and its dark and rifted masses are now only held together by the aid of iron girdles and cramps. Few remains, beside, of Constantine's Forum continue to exist ; and we look in vain for the triumphal arches that once occupied its opposite ends, the stately porticoes which enclosed it laterally, and the countless statues which stood between the pillars.

In the Circus or Hippodrome, which, under its modern name of Atmeidan, still preserves its ancient destination, and is at this day used as a place of exercise for horses, there remain several important monuments of antiquity. One of these is the obelisk of Theodosius, a slender mass of red Egyptian granite, about sixty feet in height, inscribed with hieroglyphics, and

resting on a pedestal of marble, the sides of which are encrusted with the triumphs of that emperor, badly sculptured in alto relievo. Not far off is the monument of Constantine, rising to the height of ninety feet, and constructed of masonry so coarse, that, now that the plates of iron which once shielded it are removed, the rough stones which compose it seem bound together by but a precarious bond. In the Atmeidan we meet another and yet more interesting relic—a brazen pillar, consisting of three serpents twisted into each other. Mahomet, as he rode in triumph to St. Sophia's, observed this remarkable monument, and raising his battle-axe as he passed, smote off, if the legend be worthy of credit, the lower jaw of one of the serpents. This brazen sisterhood was originally found in the camp of Xerxes after the defeat of the Persians, and, with other precious spoils, was enshrined in Delphi, where its triple head supported a golden tripod, the votive offering of the victorious Greeks. From Delphi the serpents were transferred by Constantine to his

new capital ; and have, therefore, seen nearly as much of the world as the brazen horses of Praxiteles, which, taken originally from Constantinople to Venice, have again, after a sojourn of a few years in Paris, made half of their journey home, and taken up their resting-place once more over the porches of S. Mark's.

The ancient Hippodrome was the scene of one of the most important ceremonies which, for successive centuries, Constantinople witnessed. Round it, year after year, as the birthday of the imperial City recurred, the golden statue of Constantine, bearing in one hand an image emblematic of the City, was carried in a triumphal car, attended by a long train of guards in splendid apparel, and of acolytes bearing lighted tapers. The procession halted for a few minutes opposite the throne of the reigning emperor, who, advancing and kneeling before it, worshipped the memory of the Founder of the second Rome. From this throne the emperors witnessed also the Circensian games ; but no remains exist of the marble stairs which

wound in long descent from the Circus to the imperial palace beside the sea. As vainly do we look for the many public buildings which rendered the ancient Constantinople the wonder of the world—baths, schools of learning, porticoes, granaries, halls of justice, churches, and private palaces. A single aqueduct, indeed, remains, and, connecting hill with hill, adds to the landscape that peculiar grace which the shape of the arch invariably confers. Near the gate of Adrianople, and in the garden of a Turkish house, stands the column of Marcian. It is about eighty feet in height, and its capital is quaintly supported, on its several sides, by the expanded wings of four eagles in relievo. The building which bears the name of the Palace of Belisarius is a vast, half-ruinous pile, occupied by a 'squalid colony of Jews, the poorest and most beggarly in Constantinople, and retains little to interest the traveller except one gateway, and some straggling outworks of considerable strength.

Among the ancient remains of Constantinople

there is one class peculiar to that city, and of which the original destination is a problem not easily solved by the philosophic enquirer. In various parts of the city we discover vast subterranean retreats, supported by numberless pillars, whose strangely carved capitals, fantastically wreathed with animal forms, as well as imitations of flowers and fruit, glimmer in a dim twilight, to which a green tinge is given by the fissures in the weedy roof, through which the sunbeams find access. These subterranean abodes, as is generally supposed, were constructed for the purpose of supplying the city with water during the hot season, and, in most instances, the mighty cisterns are still flooded. One of them, however, called by the Turks "Bin-Vebir-Direg," is now dried up, and is, therefore, more easily visited than the rest. Its roof rests upon more than three hundred massive columns, which, however, have lost about a third of their height, in consequence of a mass of rubbish, supposed to have been that dug up when the foundations of St. Sophia were

excavated, having been thrown into the dried-up reservoir. This gloomy retreat has been taken possession of by a sort of gipsy colony, which gathers around the visitant from the upper world with ceaseless questions and clamorous demands.

The most important of these mysterious regions is that which bears the Turkish name of "Yèrè-Batan-Seraï," and the limits of which have never been ascertained. The water-courses which wind, like veins, through the heart of the hills, expand within its ample circuit into a vast and dreary lake, black as the Stygian stream itself. As your guide waves his torch above the sluggish pool, all that you can see is an endless labyrinth of pillars, about a dozen feet apart from each other, and a wilderness of vaulted roofs supported on their broad and half-submerged trunks. Several attempts have been made to explore the limits of this city beneath a city, but hitherto without success. In various quarters of Constantinople portions of its roof have fallen in, owing to the failure of the pillars that support it ; and some are bold enough to

assert that the watery crypt extends for miles beneath the sunny region of domes, minarets, and gardens. A record is still preserved of an English explorer, bolder than the rest, who, many years ago, launched a boat on the water, in defiance of counsel and protest, for the purpose of ascertaining its limits, and who was never heard of again. It is supposed that, having lost his way, he continued to advance until his lamp burned out, and perished at last of hunger, with no other sound in his ears than the sighs of the boatman whom he had induced to accompany him, and the lapping of the wave against column and arch.

The far-famed prison of the "Seven Towers" is rapidly falling into ruin, although a portion of it is still inhabited by the chief officers of the Constantinopolitan garrison. Four of the towers have already taken their portion among the things that were ; and those which remain no longer preserve their original destination. The names of various parts of the building are significant memorials of the scenes which it once

witnessed ; and the traveller who visits the “ Place of Heads,” and bends over the “ Well of Blood,” may well be tempted—if not a Turk—to think that the revolutions of time have not been wholly for the worse. Changed, indeed, are the times since the day when the representatives of all the Christian powers were committed to that dungeon-keep. More than once a Russian ambassador had to expiate in its vaults the errors of Muscovite diplomacy. Doubtless, the world has advanced much since then in civilisation : yet it may be doubted whether in those earlier days a company of helpless nuns would, even in Russia, have been repeatedly flogged, and tortured almost to death, because they refused to renounce their faith. In Turkey they would at present find themselves comparatively safe. .



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE WALLS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

*Sight-seeing—The “Dancing Dervishes”—Turkish Bathing—Real Objects of Interest at Constantinople—The Walls—The Armenian Cemetery—The Walls of an Ancient Metropolis, its Visible History—The Destinies of Constantinople determined by its Site—Monumental Philosophy.*

I MUST own that while at Constantinople I felt but very little zeal for what is technically called “sight-seeing,” as distinguished from seeing what is beautiful, or what, from its associations, becomes impressive. The mere oddities and eccentricities of street life in no part of the world are worth a very careful examination, and still less deserve a minute description, although in too many a book of travels some twenty or thirty pages are frequently devoted to an elaborate account of a trifle not more dignified than our Punch, or the athletic feats of our mountebanks. If things which we should pass in our own villages without casting a second

glance at them are to rivet our attention merely because they belong to a remote part of the world, the traveller will meet enough and to spare of such ; but his most laboured descriptions will probably convey a much more vivid than accurate notion of what amused him at the moment. Among the sights at Constantinople, which the traveller is most earnestly recommended to see, is that of the “dancing Dervishes.” It may be worth witnessing once ; but few, I should think, would care to pay it a second visit.

This singular ceremonial takes place in a college of Dervishes within the region of Galata, and is open to the inspection of any one who does not object to discard his shoes and substitute for them a pair of slippers, with which he is speedily provided. The chapel is a small octagon building, part of which is railed off for the religious exercises of the brethren, while another portion of it is devoted to the use of strangers. The inclosed space was empty when I arrived. In a few minutes the Dervishes

entered, wrapped in long dark cloaks with flowing sleeves, and bearing on their heads that high and tapering grey hat which marks their community. Bending gradually as they advanced, and kneeling till their foreheads touched the ground, they remained for some time absorbed in prayer. Again they bowed profoundly to their superior, an old man who stood in the centre of the circle, clothed in an ample pelisse of green silk and fur, and then took their stations around him, with their hands folded on their breasts, their eyes closed, and their faces, dim and abstracted, inclined gently forward.

From a gallery in the upper part of the building musical sounds were heard ere long, to which the Dervishes added their voices. To me nothing could be much more harsh and grating than such music, but over those who joined in it the effects which it exercised seemed magical. Gradually a deep enthusiasm appeared to fall on them; and that peculiar species of rotatory movement, improperly termed dancing

commenced. Slowly at first they spun round, each revolving on his axis, and all preserving exactly the same relative position as they circled round and round the enclosure. During these extraordinary evolutions they extended their arms at each side ; while their long and loose robes, grey and brown, spreading out all around them, as their gyrations became more rapid, imparted to their figures a pyramidal outline of which their sharp hats formed the apex. This mystical dance continued for the space of about five minutes ; when stopping it in a moment and simultaneously, they stood still once more, each with his hands on his breast, and his face towards his Superior. After an interval of prayer the same ceremonial was gone through a second and a third time. There is something remarkable in the perfect regularity of the movement, and yet more so in the contrast between the extreme velocity which it reaches and the stillness of those pale absorbed countenances, slightly inclined toward the right shoulder, and calm as in a dream. Such

spectacles, however, are rendered utterly unsatisfactory by that impossibility of appreciating their real import under which a stranger labours. It is difficult for us to realise in this strange exhibition anything more than an unmeaning and, as it strikes some, a ridiculous ceremonial. On the other hand, we know that the Eastern nations have, from the earliest periods, associated dancing, as we associate music, with religious aspirations ; and it is as impossible for us to ascertain what that dance may express to them as it would be for a spectator, without an ear, to appreciate our cathedral service. On such occasions, those who stand without can know little of what is going on within ; they see but the wrong side of the tapestry, and need not wonder if they find more loose ends to pluck at than harmonised hues to admire.

Among the "sights" of Constantinople there is none that makes a stranger open his eyes more widely, than that of those vast establishments, the Public Baths. You would hardly, however, thank me for adding one more

description of them to those which abound in every book of eastern travel, from the days of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to our own. I have never caught the enthusiasm which some profess for eastern bathing. A bath is surely not one of the social pleasures; and the “delicious languor” which is described as following a Turkish bath can hardly be consistent with the presence of some hundreds of people clattering past you on a marble floor. A plunge into the sea is, to me, infinitely more exciting at once and tranquillising; nor can I believe that, either for health or cleanliness, it is necessary to allow oneself to be kneaded like dough, pommelled like a feather-bed, or scoured like the bars of a grate.

It is not in the midst of such scenes that the traveller finds a satisfactory answer to the question, “Why did I come all the way to Constantinople?” nor is it with such images that he should store his mind, if he wishes to enjoy his travel again in recollection. The quaint, the strange, the fantastically brilliant — such

objects but flit across the fancy like the shapes flung upon the wall by a magic lantern. The pictures which imprint themselves on the mind permanently, and which exercise an elevating or restorative influence there, are those alone cast upon its mirror by the beautiful and the true. The objects to which a stranger should direct his attention at Constantinople are few ; but those objects cannot be studied too carefully. Weeks and months might pass away before the glory of that spectacle—the citted hills, the cypressed vales, the mountains, the luminous sea, and purple sky, had been duly appreciated. That lesson learned, the sojourner at Constantinople will, perhaps, do best to turn from the present to the past, and endeavour to realise in his imagination but a few of those marvellous Events which were witnessed in successive ages by generations occupying the ground on which he stands—those threatening and perplexing meteors which Providence launched successively across the calm firmament of nature and daily life. He is almost driven to

the society of past times by the isolation in which he finds himself. What surrounds him excites his admiration or his wonder ; but it is when he confronts the few monuments of ages gone by at Constantinople, that his affections find a resting-place, and that the visible scene acquires a moral significance.

Of all those monuments, the most interesting by far are its ancient walls. Following the line of the city as it rises on the one side from the sea of Marmora, and from the Golden Horn on the other, they connect its extreme points by a chain of towers, which, guarding Constantinople on the land side, encloses with a stony girdle the whole of that seven-hilled peninsula on which Constantinople stands, and of which the ancient Byzantium occupied the apex. That portion of the walls which skirts the harbour is less perfectly seen than the rest, in consequence of the intrusion of houses by which too often its continuity is destroyed. The wall to the south, or that which fronts the sea, has perhaps suffered less than the rest ; and as the



stranger inspects it his eye is frequently arrested by a mouldering bass-relief, a broken statue, or an inscription half-veiled by wall-flower and ivy tendrils.

It is, however, on the land side that the defences of Constantinople are seen to their utmost advantage. Along the greater part of that line runs a double wall, separated by a wide space, and beyond the outer of which a deep ditch extends. In some places those walls are nearly perfect; in others time has dealt severely with them, but mercifully with their ruins; and nature, reclaiming her own, slowly resumes their mighty fragments into her breast, or clothes them with blooming thickets, over which the bramble creeps, and within which the bird sings. In one spot these walls present a perfect fortification; in another they look almost like a quarry. Here their sole covering consists of wide, smooth masses of ivy, shivering and shadowing in the gust: there a woodland copse, red with berry and bud, nods from the bastion, or crowns the mouldering

tower. In many places the wall is weather-stained like a sea-cliff; and in every crevice large enough to catch a wandering seed the juniper maintains its footing, or the feathery tamarisk braves the winter blast. In others they are almost bare, and their grey expanse, over which the long green lizard runs, shines baldly in the sun. In a secluded spot a cypress wood rises along the green steep between the two walls, and spreads far beyond the outer one. In its shadow the Armenians have made their cemetery. That mournful region is perhaps the least lonely part of the ancient fortifications. There, beside a new-made grave, a veiled and silent woman meets the traveller's gaze; sitting hour after hour, like one who waits beside a gate which will be opened to her at last. She is seen by him as he rides out at noon, and seen again on his return. There also the Armenian who has lost no friend, but who possesses no country, sometimes makes his retreat in the stranger's land, and muses on his native mountains far away, bathing impas-

sioned memories in the cold and gloomy waters of the remote lake Van. His recollections of country and of race must lose whatever of bitterness may attach to them elsewhere, in the presence of those walls which report the adversities of fourteen hundred years, and constitute an Empire's monument.

If the internal monuments of a metropolitan city, when regarded by a meditative eye, and considered, each with reference to the circumstances which called it into existence, express its moral character, and constitute a visible embodiment of its social progress, the external walls which guard them, battered and bruised by the stern dealings of many centuries, bring yet more vividly before us in review the political history of a people, considered in its foreign relations, and as moulded by outward accidents. Who is there that has not sat beneath the crumbling walls of a mighty city, and mused over all that, had they a voice, they might reveal? It has been said, that if any spot of the inhabited globe could but disclose all that it has witnessed in the lapse

of years, a moral, deep and sad, would close the tale. What lessons, then, might we not learn respecting man and his fortunes—the heroism that marshals his efforts, and the reverses that confute his pride—if from their cloistral seclusion of ivy and of weeds, the walls of a long-lived city might speak to us of what they have witnessed ? What would they not report of the high hopes which swelled the breasts of their founders ? How often did not an exulting people cluster upon their topmost pinnacles and towers, to witness the return of a victorious army from its mission of peril and of triumph ; and with what echoes were not their buttresses shaken when first the clarion rang out in the distance, and standards began to shine through the dust and the sunset mist ? And how fared it with the children of those exulting hosts, when the same walls first beheld the advance of a hostile force, or when, after rejecting many a haughty foe, the fatal hour had sounded, and the bulwarks tottered to their fall ?

If such thoughts rise within us as we loiter

beneath the walls of other cities, visiting us but as transient guests, and leaving us almost without an adieu, they remain with the sojourner at Constantinople, domiciled in the region of home fancies and habitual meditations. No other city, it is probable, not even Rome, has witnessed anything approaching to the number of great vicissitudes with which Constantinople has been assailed. Such was the inevitable consequence of the magnificent position which she occupies, commanding as she does the keys of the East and West. Whatever race may dominate in Constantinople, the eyes of mankind will ever be fixed upon it ; and so long as the rulers of the earth contend for power, they will ever aspire to plant their banners beside the Bosphorus. Constantine had originally fixed upon the plain of Troy as the site of his eastern metropolis ; nor did he desist from his enterprise until the new walls had in many places risen high enough above the sod to be seen by the distant mariner. Had his work proceeded, the city which was destined to bear his name would

have escaped half its calamities, but lost more than half its fame.

Again and again, as I wandered beneath those venerable walls, the events which they had witnessed during the most important period of the world's history rose up before me ; till Time seemed at last to drop its veil, as, in the world of space, distance disappears before the power of the optic glass. The drowning man is said to pass the whole of his life in review during the last few moments of it. If a kindred power were imparted to dying communities, what a forcible and pathetic moral would not rise up and detach itself from naked facts, suddenly divested of those complex details which at other times obscure them ! The history of the world, if it could be written truthfully and with reference only to facts really essential, and interests into which no illusion enters, would perhaps form a slenderer book than the court annals of many a dissolute reign. The true history of a nation is proportionately brief ; and the historian wanders

far in disquisition, description, and speculation, only because, without the aid of an inspired eye, it is impossible for him to discover the clue that guides through the labyrinth, or to keep his feet upon the narrow way of moral truth. A large part of that moral truth is always, however, significantly revealed by the surviving monuments of a nation ; and this department of hieroglyphic interpretation is not beyond the range of common faculties. In the scarred and rifted walls of Constantinople the traveller finds abundant traces of the chisel wielded by that Providence “ which shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we may.” In them the history of half the world has been written with an iron pen. It will not be time thrown away, if we cast back a traveller’s brief glance upon the fortunes of that great city which has known most of Fortune’s favours and of her despite ; and in whose destinies, not yet fully accomplished, those of our race are involved.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE WALLS AND THEIR MEMORIES.

The Vision of Constantine—The Foundation of the City—Its Fortunes—  
Belcaguered by the Goths, A. D. 378—By the Bulgarians, A. D. 559—  
By the Persians and Avars, A. D. 626—By the Arabs, A. D. 668, and  
A. D. 718—By the Russians, A. D. 865, A. D. 904, A. D. 941, A. D. 1043  
—Insulted by the Norman Fleet, A. D. 1146—Besieged and Taken  
by the Crusaders, A. D. 1203—Second Siege by the Latins, A. D. 1204  
—Surprised and Captured by Alexius, A. D. 1261—By John  
Cantacuzene, A. D. 1347—Final Destruction of the Greek Empire,  
A. D. 1453—Its Destruction in part Occasioned by the Schism of the  
East and West—Neutrality of the Western Powers—Heroic Resist-  
ance and Death of Constantino Palæologus.

THE future greatness of the new Roman metropolis was revealed prophetically to Constantine, or was at least confidently foreseen by him, if we are to place credence in that vision which encouraged him to undertake the enterprise. Within the walls of the ancient Byzantium he meditated on the prospects of the Empire, then distracted and exhausted. At night a vision appeared to him in his sleep. The Genius of the City stood before him, venerable in aspect and full of matronly dignity,



but worn with sorrow and depressed beneath the weight of years. Obeying a secret impulse, he surmounted her faded brow with the Imperial Crown; and the matron was transformed into a virgin-form, beautiful and warlike as Pallas. Constantine accepted the omen, and resolved that the city, founded nearly a thousand years before by the Greek navigator, Byzas, the position of which had been selected with the usual discrimination of the Greeks, should become the site of his new metropolis. Within a few days after, he commenced the work, A. D. 324, and that on a scale which excited the amazement of those who witnessed the inauguration of his design. "On foot," as the historian records the incident, "and with a lance in his hand, the Emperor himself led the solemn procession, and directed the line which was traced as the boundary of the destined capital; till the growing circumference" was observed with astonishment by the assistants, who at length ventured to observe, that he had already exceeded the most ample measure of

a great city. "I shall still advance," replied Constantine, "till He, the invisible guide, who marches before me, thinks proper to stop." The wall of Constantine, however, though extended far beyond the limits of Byzantium, enclosed but five of the seven hills subsequently included within Constantinople. The new city had already covered the sixth hill, and reached the summit of the seventh, in the time of the younger Theodosius, by whom the wall, which encompasses that part of it, was built. In his time its total circumference, not counting its suburbs, numbered about ten miles, extending considerably beyond the city as originally designed. Constantine urged on his work with the zeal of one who wielded all the resources of the Roman world ; and daily the Propontis was burthened by deep-laden ships bearing to the new capital the choicest marbles from the quarries of the East and West. There is one thing, however, which Power cannot command—Genius. Constantine looked in vain for architects and sculptors worthy of seconding his enterprise.

Resolved to produce what he could not discover, he founded schools of art in various provinces of his Empire ; and in the mean time, unwilling to wait for their tardy results, he despoiled those provinces of their chief treasures of art.

It was within little more than fifty years after its foundation that Constantinople first beheld the face of a hostile host. Elated by the defeat of the Roman army, and the death of the Emperor Valens, the Goths, suddenly relinquishing the siege of Adrianople, appeared in arms before the capital of the East. For some days they stood in amaze, astonished by its vastness and richness, and not less by the throngs of terrified citizens who darkened the roofs of its temples, or clustered upon its inaccessible walls. Those bulwarks, however, rose superior to such arts of attack as the barbarians commanded ; and, while their greedy eyes were fixed upon them in hopeless desire, a sally made by a body of Arabian horse in the Emperor's service routed the Scythian cavalry, and induced

a general flight. This irruption of the Goths took place in the year 378. Constantinople was again exposed to a danger not less imminent but a short time after the glories of Justinian's reign, and the building of St. Sophia. In the year 559 the Bulgarians and Slavonians crossed the Danube, which had been frozen over by a winter of peculiar severity, and advanced under the command of Zabergan, through Macedonia and Thrace, till they had arrived within twenty miles of the imperial city, at that time left almost undefended by the absence of the Roman armies on the distant frontiers of Persia, Africa, and Italy. Justinian trembled in his palace, and commanded the sacred vessels of gold and silver to be removed from the churches in the suburbs. In his service, however, he still retained, though reluctantly, an aged warrior, who had learned not to put his trust in princes, but in whom the people put trust. Belisarius, for the last time, sought the field, attended by a small and motley band of peasants and citizens, whom his name inspired, and after a short

conflict the barbarians retreated in confusion, and fell back upon their native wastes.

A yet severer trial assailed Constantinople in the year 626, while the Emperor Heraclius was absent on that expedition against Persia,—the most marvellous, perhaps, which had adorned the annals of war since the campaign of Hannibal. Each of the contending monarchs, careless of his proper safety, and leaving his own dominions comparatively undefended, had at the same moment aimed a mortal blow at his rival's heart ; and while Heraclius was capturing city after city on the banks of the Araxes and Tigris, Chosroes sent an immense army to occupy Chalcedon and to co-operate with the hosts of barbarians—Russians, Bulgarians, and Slavonians—which advanced in a southerly direction against Constantinople. For ten successive days the northern walls of Constantinople sustained and beat back the assault of 80,000 men, who shot their arrows from the summit of wooden towers, lofty as the walls themselves, and darkened the air with unceasing volleys of darts and stones.

The Greeks, however, were masters of the sea ; and the Persian army at the southern side of the water, could but watch the progress of a strife in which they were unable to take a part. Heraclius at last succeeded in sending 12,000 chosen troops to the aid of his capital : the Senate and the people seconded their absent monarch with heroic constancy ; and after a protracted siege the armies of the Avars and of the Persians were alike compelled to retreat.

The next sieges which Constantinople sustained were those by the Arabs. The former of these took place within forty-six years of the flight of Mahomet from Mecca, A.D. 668. The Saracen naval forces passed without difficulty the channel of the Hellespont, and cast anchor within a few miles of the city. Day after day the assault was carried on with all the ardour which fanaticism can add to the spirit of conquest. Greek fire, however, which at that time but began to be known, burned with a fiercer flame even than that of religious enthusiasm. It drove the Saracens back in

confusion and defeat ; and though they renewed the war during the six successive years, they were ultimately obliged to abandon their enterprise, after the martyrdom, as it was called, of thirty thousand Moslems, including the celebrated Ayub, or Job, whose name continues to consecrate the part of the city in which he fell.

The second Arab siege of Constantinople took place in A.D. 718. Moslemah, the brother of the Caliph Soliman, conducted 120,000 Arabs and Persians to the Hellespont, and crossing the strait at Abydos, reached Constantinople without meeting an obstacle, and pitched his camp opposite to its wall at the land side. Rejecting the offers of the Greeks, who would fain have bought him off, he quietly awaited the arrival of the Egyptian and Syrian naval force, reckoned at the almost incredible number of 1800 vessels. They arrived at last, and the same night was fixed by the brother of the Caliph for an assault by land and sea. The innumerable fleet was sweeping before a favourable breeze to the mouth of the Bosphorus.

when its fate overtook it. The fire-ships of the Greeks drifted in amongst them ; in a moment the "moving forest" was in flames, and after some hours a few half-burned beams weltering along the surface of a calm sea were all that remained of all that mighty array. The army of Moslemah suffered as severely from frost and snow as his naval forces did from fire ; a winter of unusual severity thinned his ranks, and, after a siege of thirteen months, his camp was broken up.

The next foe that appeared before the walls of Constantinople came from the frozen regions of the north. The Russians had become acquainted, through trade, with the wealth of the great southern Metropolis, and thirsted for the spoils of the world. Descending from the Euxine in their light canoes, they passed the Bosphorus first in A. D. 865, and took possession, almost without opposition, of the port of Constantinople. The Emperor Michael, who had been absent from his capital, made his way back, and, landing at the critical moment, asked



counsel of the Patriarch. At his suggestion he commanded a garment, supposed to possess miraculous properties, to be dipped in the sea. The relic was brought forth from the sanctuary, and no sooner had it touched the water than (as the legend records) a tempest rushed along the wave, before which the invading host was scattered. On three several occasions the Russians renewed the assault. The second attack was made A. D. 904, but proved as unsuccessful as that which had preceded it. The third attack was made by Igor, A. D. 941 : but his armament was destroyed by Greek fire ; and the larger number of the assailants were either burned or drowned. The fourth Russian assault was made by Jaroslaus, the grandson of Igor, A. D. 1043. The Greeks succeeded once more in repulsing it, though not without great loss on their side.

The Norman invasion of Greece, A. D. 1146, was not without consequences to Constantinople. The Norman fleet, under the command of George, the Admiral of Sicily, delivered from

captivity Louis the Seventh of France, who had been basely intercepted by the Greeks while returning from his unsuccessful crusade, and in a short time afterwards made its unexpected appearance under the walls of Constantinople. The Norman force was too small to inflict injury, but not to offer insult ; and the Sicilian Admiral, as he floated past the palace, fired his silver-headed arrows into its windows, and landed a few soldiers, who rifled the fruit-trees of the royal gardens. Far different in character was the attack of the Latin Crusaders A. D. 1203, when the French and Venetian forces invested Constantinople by land and sea, and the blind Doge, Dandolo, then ninety years of age, standing on the prow of his galley in complete armour, and with the standard of St. Mark abóv<sup>e</sup> his head, sailed up to the Golden Horn, and leading the Italian force to a task apparently hopeless, was the first to leap on shore. Constantinople then learned, for the first time, that it was not impregnable : the usurper Alexis was deposed, while the blind Emperor Isaak

was redeemed from his dungeon, and once more seated on the throne.

The second siege by the Latins, under the command of Boniface, Marquis of Montserrat, was the most fatal in its character which Constantinople had yet sustained ; and the excesses which attended its capture stamped upon the conquerors a disgrace equal to that which the conquered incurred by their pusillanimity. Besides an unbounded waste of treasure, and all the enormities which attend the pillage of a city, the religious animosities between the East and West gave rise to scenes of sacrilege and abomination, equalled only by the orgies of the first French revolution. The churches were plundered, the sacred chalices converted into drinking-cups, the altars into gaming-tables, and the relics of the saints were trampled under foot. The cathedral of St. Sophia itself was broken open ; the veil of the sanctuary was torn down for the sake of its gold fringe ; mules laden with its sacred vessels and treasures of silver and gold were goaded with daggers

and swords across the marble pavement ; ribald songs were chaunted in ridicule of the Oriental hymns ; a prostitute was seated on the throne of the Patriarch ; the tombs of the Emperors were violated ; and the body of Justinian, exempt, as is asserted, from decay, after the lapse of so many centuries, was exhibited before the eyes of the licentious soldiery. The destruction of works of Art was on a scale almost unprecedented. The most precious statues of antiquity were broken to pieces in the spleen of the moment, or melted down and coined into money for the payment of the troops. Countless libraries were burned, and manuscripts which never can be replaced were destroyed. Long indeed will the world have cause to lament the second capture of Constantinople by the Latins, A. D. 1204.

Once more, in the year 1261, there was heard in Constantinople at the dead of night the cry of a foe who had secretly, and at a desperate risk, entered its walls. Alexius, however, the General of the Emperor Michael, had the popular senti-

ment on his side. No sooner was the alarm sounded than it was responded to by the shouts of the Greeks, who had not yet forgotten their native sovereigns. "Victory to Michael and John" resounded on all sides. Baldwin, the last Latin Emperor, was awakened but in time to make his escape by sea ; and twenty days after his expulsion, Michael Palæologus was installed on the vacant throne. With as little expense of blood, Constantinople was again taken by John Cantacuzene, in A. D. 1347.

The attacks which, during successive centuries, the walls of Constantinople had sustained, were but the rehearsal of the tragedy in store. That Power, which, as early as A. D. 668, had appeared in arms before them, had continued century after century to watch for their downfall. The might of Islam burned to wrestle with the ancient Christian capital, and was resolved to hang about its neck until one or other had perished. In that wonderful career of success which had attended it within but a few years of the Prophet's death, the capture of Constan-

tinople had been its highest aspiration. That aspiration was never lost sight of; for instinctively and inveterately the Crescent hated the Cross.

The fatal hour had at last arrived. On the sixth of April 1453, Mahomet II. planted his standard before the gate of St. Romanus, and commenced that siege which ended in the loss to Christendom of what had for so many centuries been revered as her eastern metropolis. One thing alone, it is probable, could have averted that calamity. Had it been possible to heal the great schism in the Church, the western world would not have calmly stood by to witness the downfall of eastern Christendom. After a separation of six centuries, the Greek and Latin Churches had been solemnly reunited at the Council of Florence, A. D. 1438: but on the return of the Emperor, and the Prelates who accompanied him, all that they had effected was disowned, and the flames of religious hatred broke out more furiously than ever. The consequences were fatal. Distracted

by their own internal quarrels, the Princes of western Europe could spare neither time nor thought, neither money nor arms, to protect from the Ottoman invasion a Christian Power with which, it not being in communion with them, they had little religious sympathy, and with which, owing to its remoteness, they had no other bond. Strange indeed it may seem that in such an hour all minor points of difference should not have been overlooked ; but religious animosities, like family quarrels, are bitter and lasting, not from human perversity chiefly, but because the sympathies upon which they jar are the tenderest, and the ties which they break are the most sacred. No doubt, also, many of the European Monarchs rejoiced in having a pretext for inaction. The Pope, instead of inciting them to the support of the Grecks, (and the brave defence they made proves that a very slight assistance would have been sufficient,) prophesied ominously their approaching ruin ; and if he relented at the last moment, the time for succour was gone by.

The only aid which they received was that of 2000 strangers under the command of the Genoese, Justiniani ; while even the Genoese colony of Galata stood neuter—contented with the prospect of being the last devoured.

With no other foreign succour, the last Constantine, at the head of four or five thousand household troops, and a few monks and citizens, held at bay for weeks the Turkish force of 258,000 men. One effort more had but a few months previously been made to unite the Churches. Cardinal Isidore of Russia, the Pope's Legate, had been sent to Constantinople to negotiate a peace : the Emperor had listened attentively to his admonitions : and the representatives of both communions had attended a high service in St. Sophia's, in which the names of the eastern and western patriarchs were commemorated in union. The two parties however, thus for a moment united, had but met like the horns of the bow, and separated with as fierce a revulsion. The cathedral, supposed to have been polluted, was deserted as



profane : the popular excitement rose almost to the height of insurrection ; and Constantinople was torn asunder by religious factions as furious as those which had tormented Jerusalem in her last agony. It was on this occasion that the first minister of the Empire declared that he would rather see the turban of Mahomet in Constantinople than the Cardinal's hat. He had his wish.

The events of that terrible siege can never be forgotten by a sojourner at Constantinople. Every thing that he sees and hears is a memorial of it, and the spot is still pointed out close to the widest breach in the wall, on which the heroic Constantine was seen last before his death. Never, perhaps, was so unequal a battle so long and so direfully contested ; and at the last it seems probable that Mahomet would have been repulsed by those mighty bastions, had he not resorted to an expedient almost without precedent in the annals of war. Finding that success was not to be hoped for except through a double attack by sea and land, and unable to

force the narrow channel of the Bosphorus, he transported his lighter vessels by land, dragging them in a single night over the high grounds of Galata, and launched them again in the shallow waters of the harbour, inaccessible to the deeper ships of the Greeks. He was thus enabled to construct a floating battery, which opened its fire upon the weakest part of the city walls, and a breach was ere long effected. Disaster followed disaster, and within a few days four towers, near the gate of St. Romanus, had crumbled to the ground.

The conclusion ceased to be doubtful ; but Constantine, resolved that the Eastern empire, like its last monarch, should perish by an honourable death, refused all disgraceful conditions of peace. After consulting his astrologers, Mahomet fixed the 29th of May as the day for the final assault. On the previous day he harangued his chiefs, and sent heralds through the camp, who threatened with his implacable displeasure all who might shrink from their duty, and Dervishes, who promised to the brave

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the gardens, the rivers, and the black-eyed virgins of Paradise. The ardour of the troops burned with a steady flame, and the camp resounded with shouts of "There is no God but God ; and Mahomet is his Prophet."

History contains no passage more solemn or more pathetic than the last farewell of the Greek chiefs summoned by Constantine to his palace, the night before the general assault. The Emperor, in his final appeal, held out small hopes of success ; but the heroic band needed none resolute to die in the discharge of duty. They wept ; they embraced each other ; finally they repaired to the cathedral of St. Sophia, and for the last time before that fane was converted into a mosque, partook of the Holy Communion. The Emperor asked pardon of all whom he might ever have injured, and received from his people, as from his confessor, an absolution confirmed ere long by that of death. That sad ritual over, the chiefs mounted their horses once more ; and each proceeding to the spot on the ramparts con-

fided to his especial care, waited there for the morning light.

Day broke at last, and with it the battle. The assault was begun at the same time by sea and land ; and in a few moments a mighty and multitudinous host, wielded as if by some unseen power like that which directs the tides of ocean, was precipitated to the attack. To retreat or to stand still for a moment became impossible, even if any in that assailing army had wavered. Wave after wave was repulsed, but the conquering flood rushed on : those in the front ranks were pushed forward by the compact masses behind ; and the myriads who fell successively beneath the walls whose gaping ruins we still behold, filled up the trenches with their bodies, and bridged a way for the myriads that followed. The Pachas of Rumania, and Anatolia and Syria, and every eastern province that bowed to the Crescent, advanced successively with jewelled turban at the head of their respective hosts. Attended by his household troops, and holding an iron mace in his hand,



Mahomet II., seated on horseback close by, witnessed every assault, and rewarded every high action with his eye. During a temporary lull, the voice of the Emperor was heard urging his exhausted band to one effort more. At that moment Mahomet, lifting his mace, gave the final sign ; and the irresistible Janissaries, whose strength had been reserved until then, rose up and dashed themselves on their prey. From that instant the details of the battle were lost in clouds of smoke and flame, and the clamour of drums, trumpets, and attabals. It is only known that Justiniani, wounded in the hand by an arrow, and despairing of the event, abandoned the walls in spite of the adjurations of the Emperor. Constantine himself continued to fight to the last, surrounded by his nobles and friends, who strengthened themselves, as their ranks thinned, by shouting his name. The last words which he was heard to utter were, "Cannot there be found a Christian to slay me ?" Fearing to fall alive into the hands of the enemy, he cast aside the imperial purple,

and mingling in the thickest of the battle, was struck down by an unknown hand, and buried beneath the press of the slain. In another moment Constantinople was in the hands of the Turks.

The vast size of the city prevented the news of its capture from spreading for some time to its remoter quarters. The sudden silence was probably the first intimation of the fatal catastrophe ; and what that silence meant, the people refused to ask. While the battle thundered around the walls, and even to the last moment, there were multitudes of fanatics who believed that a divine interposition would yet come to their relief. An enthusiast, as wild as any who shook his lean hand in scorn of Titus and his legions from the glowing roofs of the Temple, had prophesied, that the Turks would indeed force their way into Constantinople ; but that, as soon as they had penetrated as far as St. Sophia's, an angel would descend from heaven, and, delivering a fiery sword to a poor man seated at the foot of Constantine's column,

would say to him, "Take this sword and avenge the people of the Lord." The commissioned minister of wrath was then to arise, and drive the invaders back to their burning sands. It is thus that Ducas, a contemporary, comments on their expectation. "Had that angel appeared ; had he offered to exterminate your foes if you would consent to the union of the Church, even then in that fatal moment you would have rejected your safety, or have deceived your God." The alternative was not offered. When the fatal news had spread, the panic-stricken population of Constantinople, urged by an irresistible instinct, rushed with one accord to the long-deserted shrine of St. Sophia. No angel but the angel of Retribution met them there. In a few minutes the senators and their slaves were bound together in couples ; the prélate and the court-jester were goaded along side by side ; the hands of the matron were tied together with her veil, and those of the nun with her sacred girdle ; and on all sides were heard the wild farewell and the wails of despair. Another

sound, ere long, was heard above that lament. From the loftiest pinnacle of St. Sophia, the clear voice of the Muezzin piercing the golden sunset, proclaimed "There is no God but God ;" and in a few minutes more Mahomet II. offered up his thanksgiving vows before that high altar at which Constantine had the night before received the Communion, and at which, a few months earlier, the united worship of the two Churches had been solemnised.

Such records as I have briefly referred to possess, for the sojourner at Constantinople, a reality with which the annals of perhaps no other city are endowed. They accompany him in his walks ; they sit beside him at his hearth ; and they follow him to his pillow. Amid his dreams they revisit him ; and in the morning the glorious vision which meets his eye appears to him at first scarcely more substantial than a dream. In the heart of an empire that visibly totters to its fall, and in the midst of a sentenced city, it is impossible to build on the present alone, or to avert the mind from the



memory of those great mutations of fortune in time past which herald the changes yet to come. At Constantinople, likewise, the appeal to the senses is so strong, that we must either become wholly materialised, or take refuge in imagination and retrospection. This may, perhaps, be one reason why the Turk himself, in the midst of his sensuous paradise, is thrown, as if, for rest, on the thought of death, and loves the cypress cemetery even more than the garden of roses. He, too, believes that his nation is, destined one day to be driven from its royal encampments on the European shore; and he is contented to believe it. Yet even the stranger at Constantinople feels sorrow for a Race condemned. Night after night, as I wandered by the sea, a mournful memory of the past, and a mournful prescience of the future, clung about me—especially the night before my departure, as, standing on the beach, I watched the crescent of a waning moon, which dropped behind a vast and precipitous barrier of endless cloud incumbent over the deep. As the last

divided points of light disappeared, a low peal of remote thunder, prophet of the storm, rolled forth above the waters, and I could hardly help fancying it an omen of approaching doom. The next day I set sail again for the West ; nor was it till many an hour after the domes and minarets of the seven-hilled city had sunk below the wave that I could fling off that impression.

THE END.

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